■ METRO / A23

Explosion hits Grepalife building in Makati; no one hurt

■ 2bU! / C1

More back-to-school tips from packing your 'kikay' kit to how to keep safe

■ WORLD / A25

US President Bush pushes for amendment banning same sex marriage

■ MOTORING / B2-2

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, June 7, 2006 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 179 P18 website: www.inq7.net

GMA rebuts accusations she won't tolerate dissent

By Christine O. Avendaño and Dona Pazzibugan

DECLARING SHE WAS NO DICTATOR, PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday sought to rebut allegations that her administration does not tolerate dissent and is behind the spate of murders of militant leaders.

Ms Arroyo said she had directed the military and police to stop the killings blamed on her government. And her defense chief ordered security

GMA REBUTS/ A17

'You can do much more than you can with a gun'

JOLO, SULU—AMERICAN TROOPS USED TO evoke fear in Mara Harun, a Muslim mother of three, but she may yet become one of their most ardent supporters on this hostile island after they helped her regain what she had lost years ago—her eyesight.

Only minutes after an American medical relief team at a crumbling Jolo hospital removed the cataracts that had kept Harun in the dark for seven years, the 60-year-old woman was bubbling

YOU CAN/ A7

Death penalty is dead

Solons cross party lines to OK GMA-backed bill repealing capital punishment

Bunye irked, says bye to 'Hello Garci'

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac

Garci
Greatest
piracy in
history
Yes Ma'am..
Hello Garci..
HELLOGARCI AWARD

ERIK ARAZAS

HELLOOO: A year later, June 6, 2006, the Gloria-Garci tape is still the main issue, say militant groups like Akbayan who stage a rally at Welcome Rotonda to make sure that the nation remembers.

EXACTLY A YEAR AFTER HIS "I have two CDs" announcement, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye was riled by reporters' continued questions on the "Hello Garci" scandal that shook Malacañang and provoked the worst political crisis in President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration.

"We are not talking about that anymore," Bunye said yesterday at a briefing when the issue involving Ms Arroyo's wiretapped conversations with then Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano was raised.

"As far as we're concerned, it's a dead issue. And since this is related to the impeachment, we know that the people are tired of too much politics … that the people would rather move forward," he said.

Bunye was visibly angered when reporters pressed him for more comments on the controversy alleging fraud in the 2004 presidential election.

Asked if he was sticking to his claims made at last year's press conference where he showed the supposed authentic and fake CDS of the wiretapped conversations, he said: "This is finished, this is not being discussed anymore.

"We have already said what we are supposed to say about this issue. We testified before Congress, and that's it."

At the House, Senior Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano wondered in a privilege speech why, a year after the wiretapping scandal and two years after the 2004 presidential polls, there had been "no credible, fair, independent investigation on election fraud."

"Everyone knows that there was cheating, everyone accepts that there was cheating, everyone agrees that we should investigate it. But not a single department or agency or government entity has investigated election fraud," Cayetano said.

"The closest we have come is

BUNYE/ A6

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Philip Tubeza and Michael Lim Ubac

IN A MOVE THAT WOULD BENefit about 1,000 people on death row, the Senate and the House of Representatives yesterday crossed party lines to approve the abolition of the death penalty, weeks before President Macapagal-Arroyo's visit to the Vatican for an audience with Pope Benedict XVI.

Saying that capital punishment was cruel, antipoor and had failed to deter heinous crimes, the Senate approved on third and final reading—by a 16-0 vote with one abstention—Senate Bill No. 2254 scrapping the death penalty.

Also crossing party lines, members of the House passed their own version by a similarly crushing vote, 119 for abolition, 20 against and one abstention.

The two chambers are expected to hammer out a common version which Ms Arroyo, who has publicly said she favors the abolition of capital punishment, is expected to sign into law.

The twin congressional action would repeal Republic Act No. 7659 or the Death Penalty Law, which Congress reimposed in 1993. It would also scrap Republic Act No. 8177, which prescribes death by lethal injection for those convicted of heinous crimes.

Instead of death, the penalty is downgraded to reclusion perpetua or life imprisonment without parole, under the Senate version.

DEATH/ A17

STATE OF RP EDUCATION

Private sector brightest spot in bleak school system

By Volt Contreras

(Last of a series)

TEAM *Report*
Fernando del Mundo
Chief, PDI i-Team

POLITICIANS AND BUREAUCRATS COME and go with speeches and sound bites on everything that's wrong with the Philippine education system but businessmen are proving to be the reformists.

Private sector assistance, now worth billions of pesos each year, is one of the rare bright spots in the ailing public school system.

What individual projects may lack in scale, corporate donors make up for in terms of strategic targeting, reliable funding, technology and, more importantly, continuity, or the assurance that new books, computers and classrooms are forthcoming no matter who won in the last elections.

A company or conglomerate usually picks a niche, a specific need on which to concentrate its philanthropy. It's not charity but "social investments."

As executives today put it: Today's bright pupil is tomorrow's smart worker, manager or entrepreneur.

The Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCII), for instance, has not only become the biggest and longest-running private donor of classrooms, with 3,200 two-room schoolhouses built since 1960.

For the second year in a row, the federation is going for wider yet quicker impact this school opening season by "seeing to it" that the cheapest notebooks in Divisoria could be

PRIVATE/ A4

Deadlock brings gov't closer to recycled budget

By TJ Burgonio, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Michael Lim Ubac

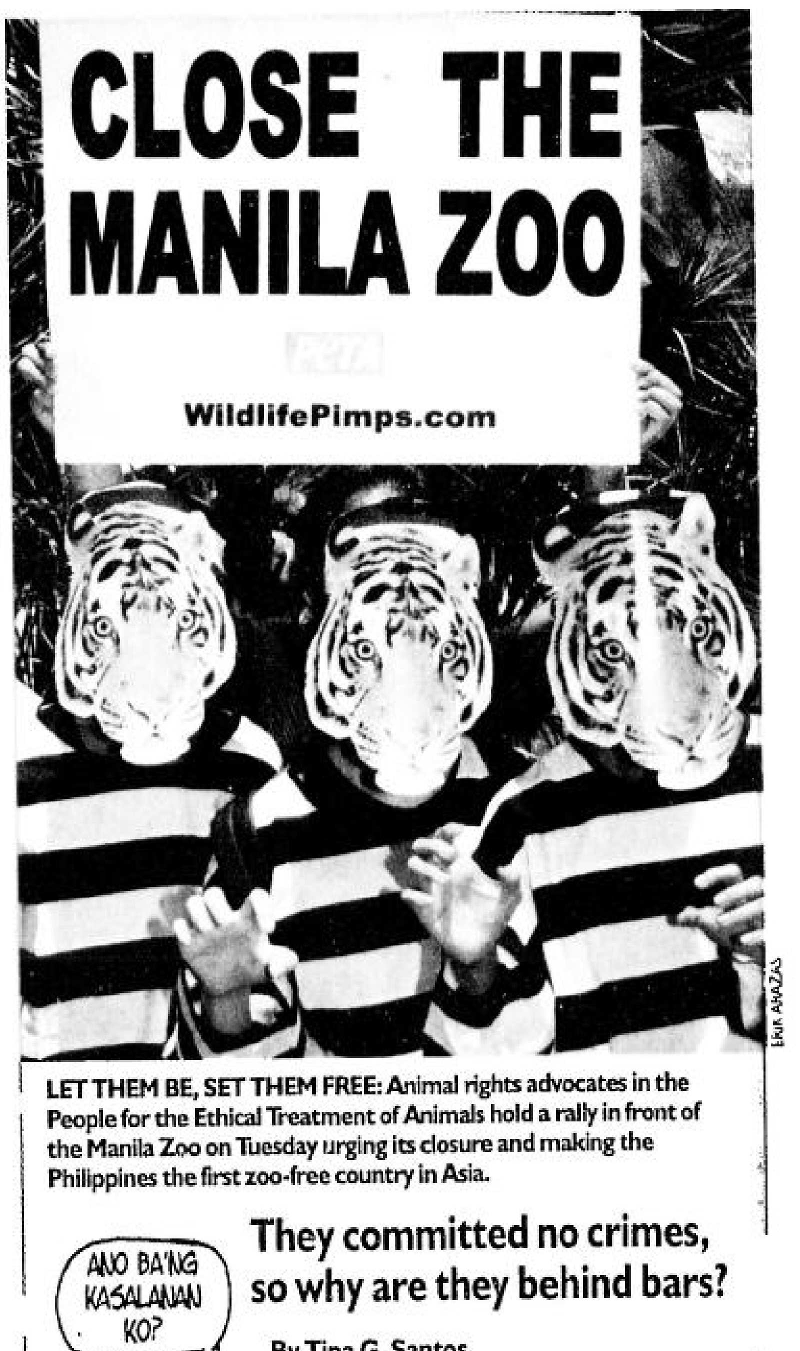
THE GOVERNMENT INCHED CLOSER TO having a reenacted budget for the rest of the year after Congress' second bicameral conference on the proposed national budget of P1.053 trillion for 2006 ended in a deadlock Monday night.

Without any breakthrough before Congress adjourns on Friday, the prospect of reenacting the P907.56-billion budget for 2005 is "strong," administration Sen. Joker Arroyo said yesterday.

"That means the President will be operating on the budget of last year, as in fact she has been operating already for the first half of 2006," he said at a briefing.

President Macapagal-Arroyo herself said

DEADLOCK / A8



ERIK ARAZAS

LET THEM BE, SET THEM FREE: Animal rights advocates in the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals hold a rally in front of the Manila Zoo on Tuesday urging its closure and making the Philippines the first zoo-free country in Asia.

Pinoy scholars in Japan reverse brain drain

SCHOLARS HAVE FUN on a night out in Roppongi, Tokyo. Among the doctoral and masteral students are, from right, Gregoria Evangelio, Charmelle Recoter, Jane Romero, Marikina Mayor Marides Fernando (in town for a conference), Michelle Parumog and Danielle Guillen. Leftmost is Akiko Kishiue who speaks Filipino.

By Doris C. Dumlao

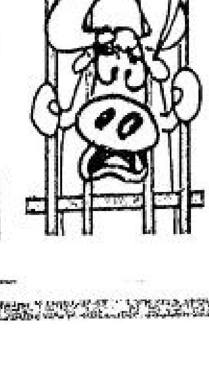
TOKYO—MORE AND MORE FILIPINOS ARE being drawn to universities in Asia's wealthiest country, but unlike those who pursue higher studies elsewhere, they tend to be more eager to return home and contribute to the brain gain.

Each year, 95 to 100 Filipino scholars are chosen by the Japanese government for research, graduate and postgraduate programs. Mostly in their 20s and 30s, they are provided more generous scholarship grants with less stringent conditions.

Those who intend to pursue MAs or Ph Ds usually apply for a research grant first, and easily get more funding if accepted by the universities for further studies.

Japan now produces more Filipino postgradu-

PINOY/ A6


ANO BA'NG KASALANAN KO?

They committed no crimes, so why are they behind bars?

By Tina G. Santos

THEY'VE COMMITTED NO CRIME SO WHY keep them behind bars?

Twelve members of the animal rights advocate People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta), wearing tiger masks and prison uniforms, yesterday staged a protest rally calling for the closure of all zoos in the country.

THEY/ A7

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY KATE V PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/06/06/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FRONT PAGE

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House OKs bill paying Marcos victims

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES PASSED ON second reading yesterday a bill allocating P8 billion in ill-gotten wealth recovered from the Marcoses as compensation for victims of human rights abuses under the martial law regime of deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos, and one of its proponents described it significant in light of the current wave of suspected extrajudicial executions.

House Bill No. 3315 was expected to clear third reading late last night or tonight.

"This is very significant. It makes the state realize that it is responsible and accountable with respect to human rights violations," said Akbayan party-list Rep. Loretta Ann Rosales.

"In a situation such as now, when there are so many extrajudicial killings, and you have torture reported, like the Erap 5, and the *desaparecidos*, this is very, very important," she added.

The bill is expected to benefit 9,539 documented human rights victims of martial law.

Rosales said that Sen. Joker Arroyo had assured her that the Senate was ready to pass its own version once the House bill was approved.

"It's as good as passed," Rosales said. "It would be easy to approve it on third reading because this is certified as urgent. I believed (Majority Leader Prospero) Nograles when he was telling me, `Etta, when I say it's going to be passed, it's going to be passed.' They all sounded determined, even Speaker Jose de Venecia."

Rosales said that President Macapagal-Arroyo told her that she wanted the bill enacted into law as early as November 2004.

Rosales said that the bill's proponents would try to insist in the bicameral conference committee that the victims get P10 billion instead of P8 billion.

The bill originally mandated that $200 million (around P10.5 billion) of the $683 million in Marcos funds recovered from Swiss banks be given to the victims.

However, the House leadership insisted that the compensation should be set in pesos and the total amount fixed at P8 billion.

"The P8 billion is already a big amount but what we will do is try to haggle this in the (bicameral conference committee) to bring it back to P10 billion, because what we talked about was $200 million. Joker Arroyo is very strong on $200 million," Rosales said.

The proposed law would set up a compensation board that would determine how much each victim should receive, and this would depend on the gravity of the abuse suffered.

Rosales said claimants who won a $2 billion class suit against the Marcoses in Hawaii in 1995 would be given priority in the award of compensation but "without prejudice to other victims."

The bill limits "compensable victims" to those who suffered human rights violations from 1972 up to 1986 only.

For victims who died, their spouse or "direct descendants and ascendants, in that order," would be entitled to receive compensation.

The bill states that "any compensation received under this Act shall be without prejudice to the receipt of any other sum by the victim from the estate of Ferdinand Marcos or any person, other than the Republic, in any case involving any human rights violation as defined by this act."

The compensation board would be composed of a retired Supreme Court justice as chair and four members—two representatives from a human rights nongovernmental organization, the secretary of justice, and the chair of the Commission on Human Rights.

The NGO representatives should not be beneficiaries. They should not be claimants or a member of any organization claiming compensation," Rosales said.

No one will accept FPJ award

IT APPEARS THAT FOR NOW NO one will be going to Malacañang on Friday to accept the National Artist Award for the late movie idol Fernando Poe Jr.

Nestor Jardin, president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (not Hardin and not the National Commission on Culture and the Arts as reported earlier) said yesterday that film director Eddie Romero, himself a National Artist Awardee, had told the NCCA that he would not be accepting the award on behalf of the Poe family.

Romero was earlier designated by Poe's widow, actress Susan Roces, to be the family's representative at the awarding rites. But it seems this was no longer the case.

"He [Romero] was no longer requested by the Poe family to receive the award," Jardin said in a phone interview.

"No representative for the family will be there to accept the award," he said.

Jardin said he was "disappointed" by the development, noting that when the NCCA and CCP recommended Poe for the award, there were "no political considerations" involved.

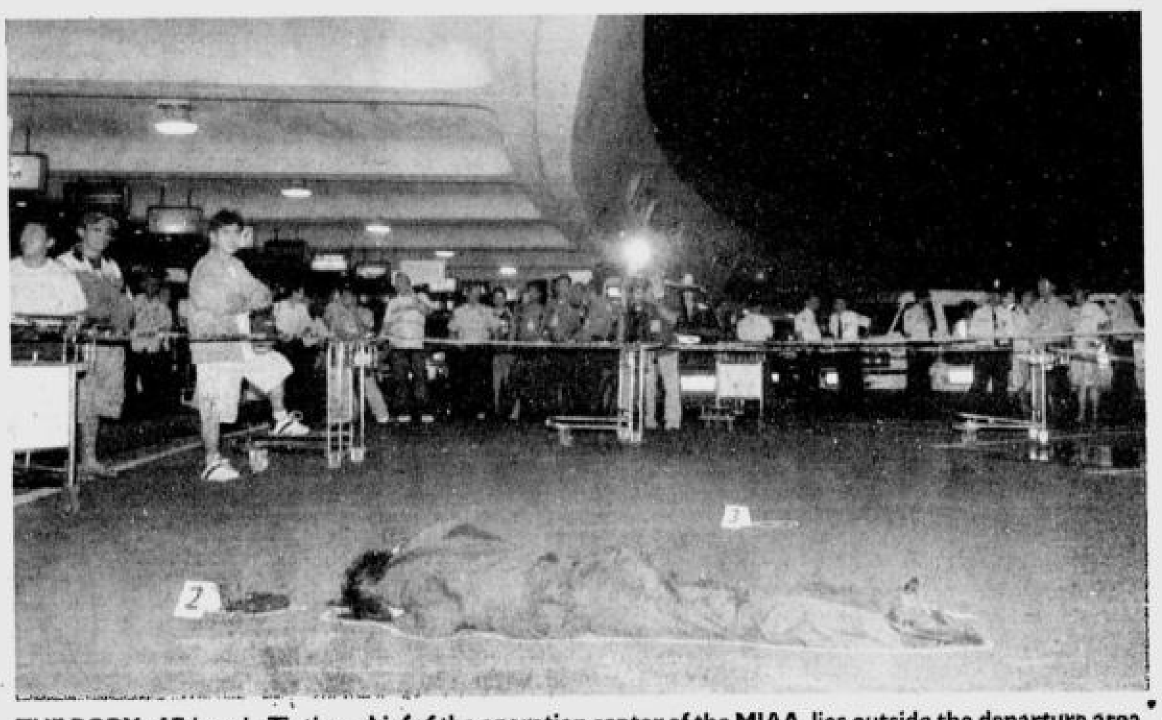
"I fervently hope [the family] will reconsider the decision because after all FPJ was selected by his peers in the artistic community," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is set to confer the award on Poe and five other distinguished Filipino artists on Friday in ceremonies in Malacañang.

When Roces was invited by officials to accept the posthumous award for her husband on May 25, she informed them that she had requested Romero, a close friend of Poe's, to accept the award for the family.

Roces has joined opposition calls for Ms Arroyo to resign, accusing her of stealing the 2004 election from her husband.

Poe ran as the opposition presidential candidate in the May 2004 elections but lost to Ms Arroyo by about a million votes. He died of a massive stroke in December 2004. *Christine Avendaño*



THE BODY of Eduardo Tiotien, chief of the operation center of the MIAA, lies outside the departure area of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in full view of passengers and the curious. JESS YUSON

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Cops claim solution near in Sanchez bombing

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—Police investigating last week's bomb attack on Batangas Gov. Armando Sanchez said yesterday that they were close to solving the botched assassination attempt.

A close associate of Sanchez, meanwhile, said he received reports that the brains of the slay try had offered P100 million to have the governor killed.

Senior Supt. Ricardo Padilla, head of the special team investigating the incident, said they were close to uncovering the mastermind and the suspects who planted the bomb that killed two of Sanchez's aides.

He, however, declined to name the suspects and the motive behind the attack.

Members of the special investigating team composed of bomb experts, crime scene investigators and the local police met yesterday for the first time in a case conference held at the office of Padilla in this camp.

Padilla, who is also the deputy regional director for operations of the Calabarzon police, said they would be holding weekly meetings to resolve the case quickly.

Police investigators said yesterday the bomb which ripped through Sanchez's vehicle had been planted under the driver's seat.

Supt. Ligaya Cabal, chief of the Scene of the Crime Operatives (Soco) of the Calabarzon police, said the bomb, identified as a TNT explosive, had been tied to the underchassis of Sanchez's Hummer H2 SUV, directly under the driver's seat.

"That would explain why most of the debris and damage were on the left side of the vehicle," Cabal said.

A missing 6-inch piece of the vehicle's step board served to reinforce their findings. "That part should have been there if it was not blown away," she said.

The bodies, she said, bore no piercing from the debris. Both driver and bodyguard were already dead before the second explosion, she added. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Airport official shot dead by aviation cop at Naia

By Nikko Dizon

AN AIRPORT OFFICIAL WAS ALlegedly gunned down by an aviation police major late Monday night at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia).

The violent death of Eduardo Tiotioen, an airport action officer, highlighted the struggle to curb unlawful activities at the airport, particularly the illegal facilitation of passengers' arrivals and departures.

"This is painful to me. Ed believed in what we are doing. This is what you get for doing what's right," Alfonso Cusi, airport chief, told the INQUIRER.

A crestfallen Cusi sat in a corner at the Naia 1 departure curbside, away from the crowd and investigators that had gathered around his friend who lay lifeless on the ground.

Tiotioen, who was in his mid-40s, was shot at close range at around 11:40 p.m. in front of horrified security guards, airport employees and a handful of late night flight passengers.

Cusi acknowledged that Tiotioen was a trusted staffer he had brought along from the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) following his appointment by President Macapagal-Arroyo as general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) in 2004.

As police examined the crime scene, the suspected gunman, Chief Insp. Cenon Tenorio, surrendered to his superiors at the Aviation Security Group (ASG), the Philippine National Police (PNP) unit tasked to protect the airport complex.

"He (Tenorio) called me up and said, 'I'm very sorry, sir. *Nangyari ito. Nahihiya ako, pero nangyari*(It happened. I am ashamed but it happened),'" said Senior Supt. Pablo Francisco Balagtas, commander of the 1st Police Center for Aviation Security (PCAS).

In a phone interview, Balagtas said that as head of operations, Tenorio was fourth in command at the 1st PCAS, which has jurisdiction over Naia 1 and the Centennial Terminal.

Cusi had requested the National Bureau of Investigation to look into the killing, instead of the ASG, to ensure an impartial investigation.

Initial investigation showed that shortly before the incident, Tiotioen saw Tenorio assisting an unidentified passenger at the Naia 1 arrival area.

The action officer suspected an illegal facilitation, purportedly called Tenorio's attention, and radioed the CCTV unit, which he heads, to focus the camera on the police officer.

Later, Tenorio allegedly waited for Tiotioen, who was ending his shift and would have proceeded to his vehicle parked at the departure curbside.

NBI investigator Angelito Magno said that based on witnesses' accounts, Tenorio grabbed Tiotioen and tried to force him into a vehicle.

A commotion ensued, followed by three gunshots.

Tiotioen fell to the ground and Tenorio fled with his pistol.

The ASG had turned over Tenorio and his firearm to Magno early yesterday morning.

The suspect would be facing murder charges.

Palace, traders rebuked on wages

By Philip C. Tubeza and Jerome Aning

HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER Prospero Nograles yesterday rebuked Palace officials and business leaders who raised a howl over the proposed P125 legislated wage hike after earlier snubbing congressional hearings.

"It passed the House. They should have objected during the labor committee hearings which they snubbed," Nograles said. "They all didn't attend, including the employers groups," he added.

Nograles said Palace officials and employers should have voiced their opposition to House Bill 345 during the hearings of the House labor committee and not after the bill was passed on second reading.

Nograles made the comment after businessmen and National Economic Development Authority chair Romulo Neri warned of massive layoffs if the bill was signed into law.

The bill had already been watered down with the P125 across-the board wage hike to be implemented in three tranches: P45 in October this year, P40 in 2007 and P40 in 2008.

However, Neri said that a P45 wage hike would displace between 288,000 and 620,000 workers. He added that between 225,000 and 424,000 more could be laid off in 2007, and between 210,00 and 365,000 in 2008.

But Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Roseller Barinaga, House labor committee chair, downplayed Neri's warning, saying layoffs would still happen even if the bill were scrapped.

"Whether or not the bill is passed, there would still be layoffs. There are other factors at play here. It's not just the wage hike bill," Barinaga said.

Barinaga said he hoped the House would pass the bill on third reading.

He said that if the Palace and employers' groups had complaints about the bill, they could follow it up in the Senate or the bicameral conference committee.

The militant Kilusang Mayo Uno also scoffed at Neri's dire prediction.

"Neri is obviously toeing the line of Malacañang and business groups, which is to predict a doomsday scenario against the granting of just wages for workers," said KMU secretary general Joel Maglunsod.

Maglunsod said that even with the absence of wage hikes, the inflation rate would still rise and unemployment worsen due to deep-seated problems the domestic economy, particularly contractualization and other flexible labor practices.

FORMAL APPOINTMENT
Angolan Ambassador to the Philippines Eliseo de Figuereido (second from left) presents to Helen Ong the Exequator formalizing her appointment as honorary consul of the Republic of Angola in the Philippines at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Pasay City. Others in photo are, from left, Foreign Assistant Secretary Victor Garcia III of the DFA Office of Legal Affairs, DFA chief of protocol Jerill G. Santos and Dr. Sonny Ong.

RP dropped from US list of traffickers

By Volt Contreras

THE PHILIPPINES HAS MADE IT out of Washington's human trafficking watch list owing to a series of court victories and a larger deployment of prosecutors against what the US government regards as modern-day slavery—forced prostitution, sex trafficking and child labor—the US Embassy said yesterday.

The US Department of State's 2006 Trafficking in Persons report, released on Monday, said the Philippines had been taken out of its watch list of problems nations and moved up to a category of countries that had made substantial progress in combating human trafficking.

The report congratulated the Philippine government for improvements made during the year, noting it had "stepped up efforts to implement its antitrafficking law and made initial progress in implementing strategies to combat (trafficking in persons), particularly in prosecuting human traffickers."

The report, however, maintained that the country had yet to "fully comply with the minimum standards and remains a source, transit, and destination country for men, women and children trafficked for purposes of human exploitation and forced labor."

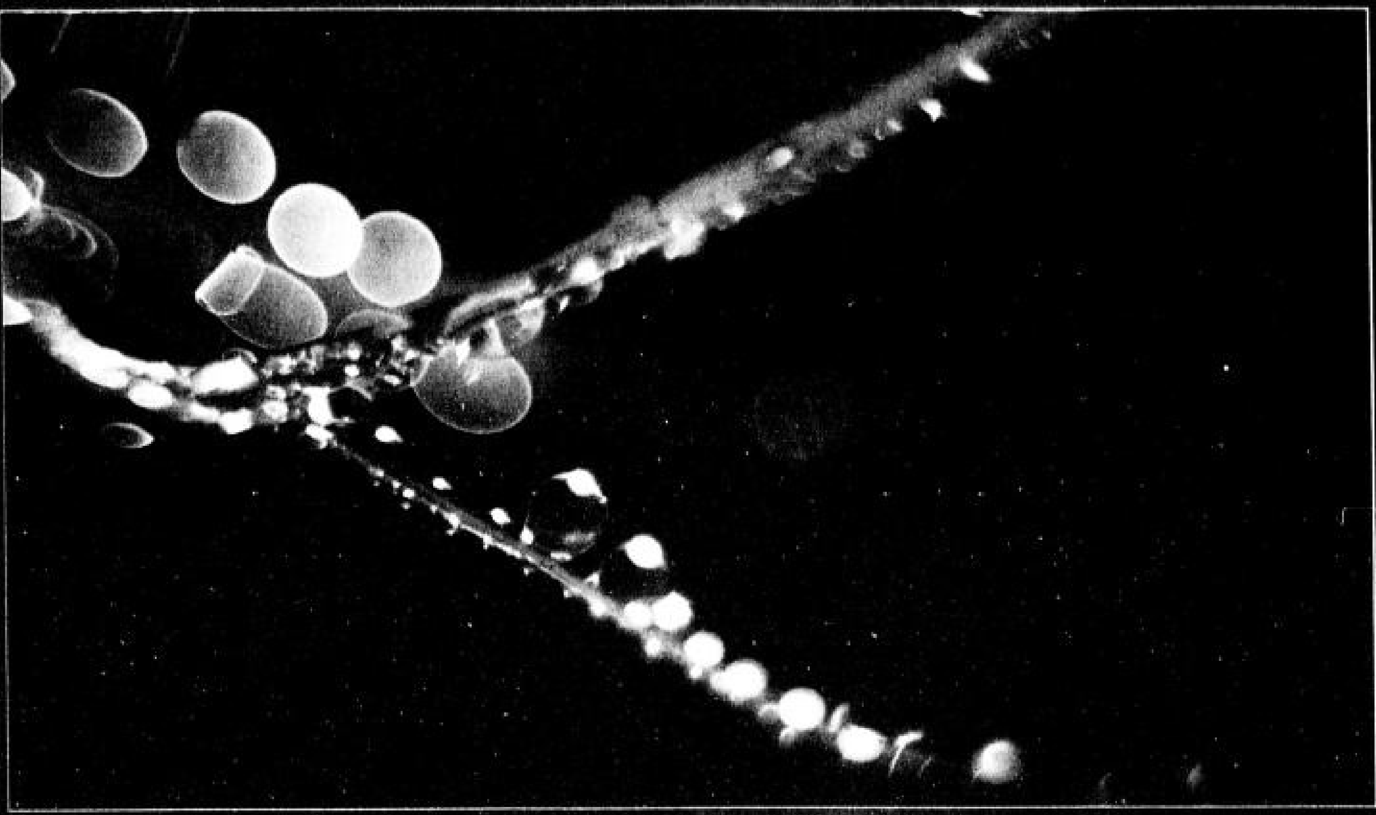
According to the embassy, "Tier 1" countries are those that fully comply with minimum international standards while those in "Tier 2"—including the Philippines—do not fully comply but are making significant efforts to combat the problem.

Down a rank is the "Tier 2 Watch List," which lists countries that have made efforts to combat trafficking but still have a significant number of victims and, until this year, had included the Philippines.

"Tier 3" countries are the worst offenders and could face restrictions on US government assistance.

The Philippines shares the Tier 2 bracket with 78 other countries.

The report said the Philippines had made "discernible progress" against human trafficking, particularly in law enforcement, noting that the Department of Justice had tripled the number of prosecutors handling trafficking cases at the national level and assigned additional personnel in the provinces. *With a report from AP*



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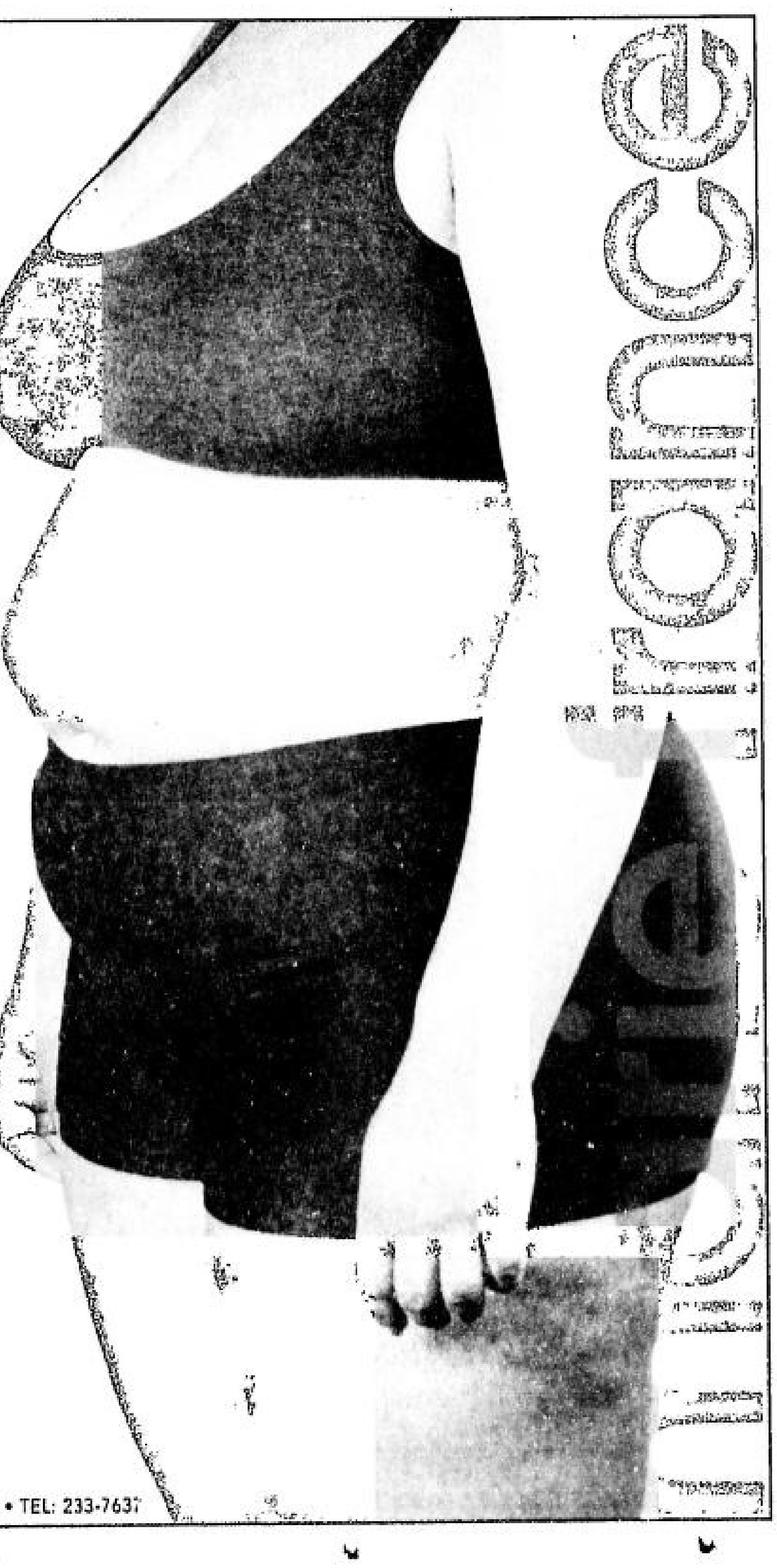
Security body sets 1st meet

THE NEWLY CREATED Filipino-American Security Engagement Board is to meet for the first time in Hawaii this weekend to map out new joint exercises on counterterrorism and other "nontraditional" security threats.

Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. said the meeting in Honolulu of top Philippine and US military and defense officials will coincide with the regular meeting of the two countries' Mutual Defense Board which will tackle cooperation in the event of external attacks.

AFP chief of staff Gen. Generoso Senga, who cochairs both bodies, will lead the Philippine delegation, which officials said is scheduled to leave for Honolulu on Thursday or Friday. Senga's cochair is Admiral William Fallon, head of the US military's Pacific Command who was in Jolo, Sulu, last Monday.

"In the first hour, they will discuss preparations for external armed attack. [In the] second hour, they will discuss how to address nontraditional concerns," Cruz said.
Dona Z. Pazzibugan



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Private sector brightest spot in bleak school system

From page A1

bought at P8.50 each, said FFCCCI president Francis Chua.

"On the average, we have donated one school building a day," Chua said of his group's Operation: Barrio School, which on any given class day benefits some 640,000 students.

A challenge

"But it's quite sad that the more schools we build, the more shortages seem to occur because of population growth," he said. "It's a challenge we just have to live with."

Ayala Foundation Inc. has chosen the high-tech route. It heads a consortium that, in the next five years, hopes to connect all 5,500 public high schools nationwide to the Internet.

This P1.5-billion project is dubbed "Gilas," a Filipino term for talent or wondrous ability, and also stands for Gearing Up Internet Literacy and Access for Students.

Gilas now covers 780 schools, mostly in Mindanao, since it was launched two years ago.

At a cost of about P300,000 per school, setting up "virtual libraries" composed of 10 PCs each seemed more cost-effective and could offer a practically limitless source of information than traditional brick-and-mortar libraries.

Media Master

The device, called Media Master, can then play back the material—say, an English primer on volcanoes, oceans, wild animals—to supplement the day's lectures. Around 200 elementary schools now enjoy this satellite feed since Text2Teach was launched in May 2003, with 300 to 400 more schools targeted in the next few years.

Only as good as teachers

"But these tools can only be as good as the teachers themselves," conceded Mario Derequito, director of AFI's Center for Social Development.

Hence, other private sector initiatives focusing on the teachers, like the Foundation for the Upgrading of Education (FUSE), established 12 years ago by Sen. Edgardo Angara, former Agriculture Secretary Salvador Escudero and businessman Lucio Tan.

FUSE already saw the potential of video as teaching aid way back in the days of the VHS tape. It produced a set of instructional tapes known as Constel (Continuing Studies Through Education).

The tapes have since been viewed by around 10,000 public school teachers who, under a parallel FUSE program, have undergone training, according to Escudero, the FUSE president.

Some P150 million has gone to the production of the tapes as well as the training program courses, which in the last two years have also expanded into a scholarship for teachers recommended by the Department of Education for master's degrees in Ateneo de Manila University or De La Salle University.

There are currently 73 such scholars, for whom the foundation has allotted P15 million.

Mentoring the mentors

"Mentoring the Mentors" is also the centerpiece project of a much younger group, the Foundation for Worldwide People Power, whose prime movers include INQUIRER founding chair Eugenia D. Apostol.

"Mentors" training modules seek to not only upgrade teachers' classroom skills but boost their morale, according to FWPP executive director Butch Hernandez.

"Teachers are guided into forming cohesive faculties that can manage their time and keep themselves properly motivated to cope with big classroom sizes and lack of resources," Hernandez said.

"Our approach is not only skills-building but also inspirational. (The teachers) begin to look beyond personal and other material inadequacies. They begin to have stronger empathy for their pupils. 'This is no longer just about me but about them,'" he added.

The program basically involves gathering teachers from a particular school for four to five days in workshops on team-building, how to prepare better lesson plans, how to become better motivators, etc. They will be monitored for a year after the training.

"It's easy to blame teachers for what's happening, but we're all in this together," said Hernandez as he referred to another FWWPP scheme, Local Mobilization Strategy (LMS).

LMS is a prescribed process in community organizing that enables parents, donors and institutions to enter into a closer relationship with a school and make sure "any physical improvement on the campus will actually translate into higher grades for the children."

Hernandez said there had been countless examples of schools receiving or soliciting certain donations—a new computer, new roofing, a fresh coat of paint—without any real "incentive" relating to student performance.

Performance

The LMS is a mechanism for the community and the school to enter into a sort of agreement and set "achievable goals," like a 10-percent increase in test scores come the final exams.

"We shift the discussion from mere 'welfare' mentality to performance," Hernandez said.

The League of Corporate Foundations (LCF), in its annual report for 2005, said 90 percent of its 70-plus member companies were engaged in one form or another in the pursuit of quality education.

The report cited a survey of 35 LCF members plus those belonging to the FFCCCI and the Philippine Business for Social Progress showing they were all involved in 257 such projects with total funding of P1.5 billion last year alone.

Too important to leave to state

These projects have benefited 3.1 million public school pupils; 34,624 schools; 14,370 teachers, and 7,000 other individuals in related sectors.

Addressing an LCF function in July last year, then Education Undersecretary Mike Luz exhorted the business sector to "go beyond" material donations and aspire for expertise-sharing and capability-building.

Luz, who eight months later would resign because of a tiff with Malacañang, gave his own spin to a familiar saying and conceded: "Education is too important to leave to the government alone."

Corrections

IN THE JUNE 4 ISSUE, one of the front-page windows misstated that 100 wounded dolphins had been driven back to sea by the fisherfolk of Santa Ana, Cagayan. There were several wounded dolphins, but they did not total 100.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 5 ISSUE, the caption of a front-page photo misstated the number of teachers and the number of classes inside one classroom at Geronimo Santiago School in Manila. In that classroom, there were four teachers holding four classes simultaneously—not just two teachers holding two classes.

* * *

IN THE JUNE 6 ISSUE, a story on Page A2—"Who will finally receive award for FPJ?"—misspelled the name of an official of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. The correct spelling of the official's name is Nestor Jardin—not Hardin. The same story misstated Jardin's position in the commission. Jardin is a commissioner—not the president—of the NCCA. He is also the president of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

'BRIGADA ESKWELA'

Volunteers give dirty classrooms a face-lift

By Alcuin Papa

TEACHERS REMEMBER HOW the Diosdado Macapagal Elementary School in Tatalon, Quezon City, looked five years ago.

The paint on the walls was peeling off, the roofs of the classrooms were leaking, and a poor drainage system was bringing murky water into the classrooms, submerging them when the rains came.

But since the Department of Education started its National Schools Maintenance Week dubbed "Brigada Eskwela" in 2003, there has been much improvement in the school, according to assistant principal Dr. Evelyn de Leon.

Tatalon is mostly a depressed area composed of poor to lower-middle class families. But entering the Diosdado Macapagal Elementary School is like being transported to another world.

The walls gleam with a fresh coat of paint. The roofs of the buildings have been repaired and the classrooms have been cleaned. Now, a bathroom can be found in nearly all of the 64 rooms.

A concrete pathway and an improved drainage system have kept floodwaters from entering the classrooms.

"Parents usually didn't send their children to school on the first day of classes because the students would be doing the cleaning," De Leon told the INQUIRER.

"They would go home all dirtied up," she said. "But now with Brigada Eskwela, the students went straight to their lessons because they didn't have to clean up first."

Brigada Eskwela was conceived partly to address the deteriorating physical state of public schools around the country.

DepEd officials said Brigada Eskwela was also a way to attract greater participation of the community, through volunteerism.

DepEd officer in charge Fe Hidalgo explained that the program was a nationwide voluntary effort of teachers, parents, students, members of the community, local governments and other organizations to do minor repairs in their schools in preparation for the start of the school year.

Brigada Eskwela (Bayanihan Para Sa Paaralan) encourages volunteers to donate materials such as paint, cement, lumber and other materials, which could be used for minor repairs.

Volunteers are also enjoined to contribute man-hours in the repair of the schools. The principals are in charge of marshalling the materials and soliciting the volunteer "man-hours" for the activity.

Hidalgo said the DepEd started the project to offset gaps in the education budget. She estimated that the department could save around P2 billion in school maintenance and operating expenses (MOE) a year as a result of the Brigada Eskwela.

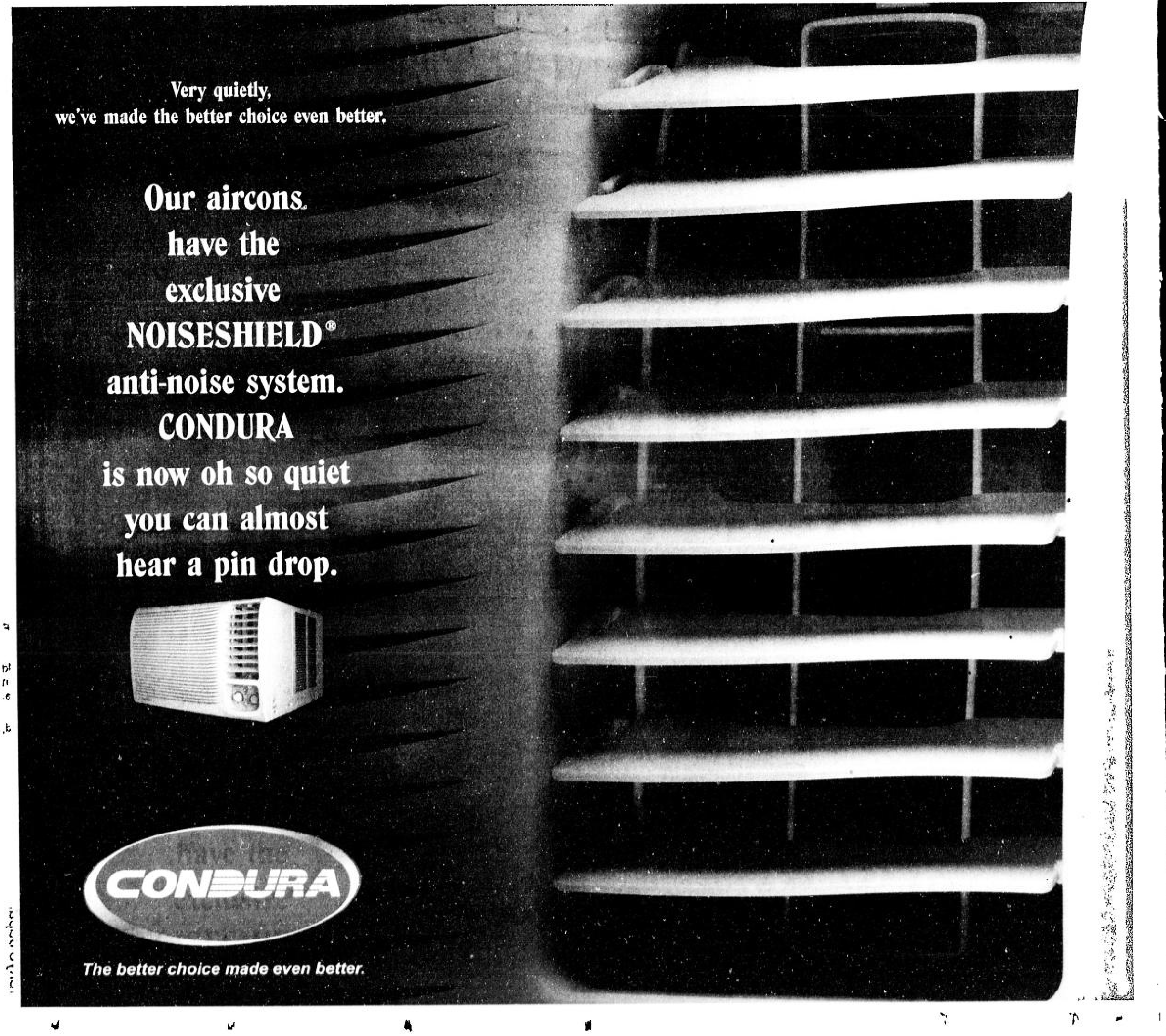
Last year's Brigada Eskwela involved 26,034 public schools (or 61 percent of all public schools nationwide). A total of 2,008,628 volunteer man-days (worth P572.49 million) was generated and P455.43 million worth of donations in-kind were gathered.

This year, Hidalgo said a total of 42,221 public elementary and high schools, or 70 percent of public schools around the country, participated in the project, up 9 percent from last year.

There are 37,000 public elementary schools and 4,769 public high schools in the country.

Because of the program, the money saved by the schools from their MOE rose to P2 billion this year from P1 billion last year, according to Hidalgo.

"Brigada Eskwela is *bayanihan* in action. Here we see the spirit of volunteerism very much alive among our school communities. This is an important value we should teach each and every Filipino child," she said.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Cha-cha protest slated for Independence Day

A MILITANT CATHOLIC archbishop said yesterday an interfaith and multisectoral coalition would take to the streets next week to denounce efforts by the Arroyo administration to amend the Constitution, while Manila Mayor Lito Atienza said he and other suburban mayors planned a series of public forums throughout the metropolis in support of Charter change.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz of Lingayen and Dagupan said that the coalition had gotten the commitment of Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, and other prelates to attend the rally, which will coincide with the celebration of Independence Day on Monday.

"The rally is specifically to express that we are against Charter change," Cruz said. "Hopefully it will be a very objective rally without rancor or anger and just a manifestation of sentiments of some people against the proposed Chacha."

Meanwhile, President Macapagal-Arroyo said in an interview over dzMM radio that she did not know how the Charter change effort would go because it "has a life of its own."

"The timetable is not in my hands, but what I can say is that I will remain President until 2010 and not one day later."

Cruz told reporters that the protest would be "more of a prayer rally," so organizers would not allow participants to carry banners, flags, streamers or placards.

Cruz added that groups from various political affiliations, faiths and sectors would be gathering for the protest.

"Hopefully, it will not have ideological content because it is just a rally against Cha-cha," he added. "If the government is rallying people for Cha-cha I see no reason why we cannot rally against Chacha."

Cruz said he hoped the government would not look at the rally as a destabilization move just because it contradicts the Arroyo administration's policy.

He added that he and bishops were not exactly among the organizers of the rally but were only invited to attend it. *Jerome Aning, Norman Bordadora and Christine O. Avendaño*

Noli seeks China trade

VICE PRESIDENT Noli de Castro yesterday asked China's top government officials to encourage Chinese businessmen to invest in the Philippines, particularly in housing and mining.

De Castro, who is in China for an official visit, met separately with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and Vice President Zeng Qinghong for bilateral talks.

In their meetings, De Castro told the Chinese leaders that while there had been advances in trade between the two countries, Chinese investments in the Philippines had remained minuscule.

De Castro noted that Chinese investments in the country in the first three quarters of 2005 amounted only to P82.3 million, accounting for a measly 0.14 percent of total foreign investments for the period.

"We would appreciate the assistance of the Chinese government in promoting investment opportunities in the Philippines among your investors, particularly in infrastructure development, agriculture and fisheries, housing and mining," he said.

De Castro said the Philippines welcomed Chinese investments in housing to help the government cope with the massive housing shortage. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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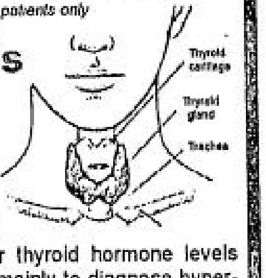

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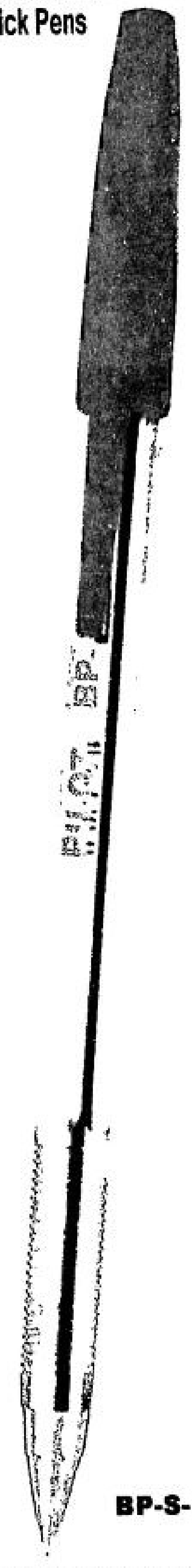

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Bunye irked, says bye to 'Hello Garci'

From page A1

BUNYE

GARCILLANO

the Senate investigation," he added.

Cayetano said the five House committees that looked into the matter focused on wiretapping and political destabilization but "skirted" the issue of election fraud.

"Is it an accident that the first anniversary of the Gloria-Garci tapes falls on the day June 6, 2006, or more popularly known as 666—a date associated with an omen or with evil?" he said.

Answering his own question, he said it was not an accident because "the evils of corruption are born out of election fraud."

"We hope this is the last anniversary of the Garci tapes," Cayetano said.

He said the scandal should have appropriate closure.

"If not, the 2007 elections will be the next victim of electoral fraud," he warned, adding that "those who do not study the lessons of history are bound to repeat it."

Garci, Gary

At his press conference last year, Bunye claimed that the two "Hello Garci" CDS were delivered anonymously to his house in Ayala-Alabang.

He said that the CD supposedly being floated by the opposition was a spliced copy, and that in the original copy, the person Ms Arroyo was speaking with on the phone was not Garcillano but Edgardo "Gary" Ruado, an aide of her brother-in-law, Rep. Ignacio Arroyo.

Bunye subsequently submitted the two CDs to the National Bureau of Investigation. He was also summoned to Congress to explain how he got hold of the CDs.

"We have explained this quite exhaustively," the press secretary told reporters yesterday. "We were subjected to interpellation for one day and a half, so I think further discussions would not serve any useful purpose."

He also said there was nothing to regret about the "Hello Garci" press conference.

Bunye said the decision to expose the two CDs was made on the "spur of the moment" because the opposition had leaked a copy to a radio station that same morning.

Half-full, half-empty

At the Newsmakers Forum last week, Bunye said he had never lied to the media.

"I never stretch the truth. I might have highlighted, or I might have marshaled, the presentation. For example, I always prefer to look at a half-full glass rather than a half-empty glass," he said.

Like Ms Arroyo, Bunye appeared to have emerged stronger from last year's political crisis.

He has since become the government's media czar, with the resignation of then Communications Director Silvestre Afable and the centralization of the multibillion-peso advertising budgets of all state agencies and corporations under his office.

Asked yesterday if he felt that Ms Arroyo had rewarded him enough for his loyalty and if he felt that he was a more powerful press secretary now than 12 months ago, Bunye was touchy.

"You've asked that question in private and I have answered you. I don't know the reason for the question, unless you want to show that you are really *makulit* (pushy)," he said.

He added: "We have a professional relationship, and I believe one of the reasons I have stayed long and served in this capacity is because I believe in her program, I believe in the vision of the President.

"I don't have to read her mind because most of the policies of the President are in the MTPDP (Medium Term Philippine Development Program), and this is what I consider my bible. And I believe all Cabinet members should read this very thoroughly."

Asked what Ms Arroyo had learned from the scandal, Bunye said: "I think the lesson there is, just focus on your job and I think things will turn out OK. The President has not been distracted. She has performed according to her plans, and the proof of that is the very respectable growth of our economy."

'Never again'

In his speech, Cayetano expressed hope that the people and their leaders had learned their own lessons.

"[Let us] remind ourselves that this should never again happen to our country," he said. "Let us ask ourselves today, 'Have we as a nation learned from our lesson from the Garci-Gloria tape?'"

According to Cayetano, the lesson learned so far by the people was that wiretapping is illegal. "We also learned not to be caught talking about cheating, unless you want your voice as a 'Hello Garci' ring tone," he said.

"Seriously, the main issue is election fraud—the mother of all corruption in our country," Cayetano said, pointing out that for every P1 collected by the government, 40 centavos went to corruption.

Thus, he said, hunger and unemployment, peace and order, health care and education were issues directly affected by election fraud.

Addressing Ms Arroyo, Cayetano said: "After the holdup and coverup, Madam President, your time is up."

He called for closure through a "quick, independent investigation," and for the Commission on Elections to contribute to the search for the truth behind the "Hello Garci" scandal.

'Stronger in enchanted kingdom'

Senate President Franklin Drilon, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Rodolfo Biazon—all critics of Ms Arroyo—said the scandal was far from over.

"There is talk about [another] impeachment in the House. I'm sure it would include the Garci tapes," said Drilon who, along with the Liberal Party that he heads, withdrew support from Ms Arroyo and called for her resignation at the peak of the crisis last year.

"There are fundamental things to be resolved, questions to be answered, and the answers to these questions are being barred from being known by the public because of the continued insistence on invoking [Executive Order] 464," Biazon said.

Commenting on Bunye's earlier statement that Ms Arroyo had emerged stronger from the crisis, Pimentel said: "Yes, she's stronger in the enchanted kingdom, but not in the real world [where] she is weakening by the day.

"[She] is weakening the longer she stays in office under very questionable circumstances. She has nowhere to go but down."

But Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile agreed with Malacañang's stance: "She has weathered the storm so far, so I think she is already out of it."

With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana

Pinoy scholars in Japan …

From page A1

ate-degree holders than other First World countries.

"I prefer Japan because I've been here before and it's closer to the Philippines. I get homesick easily," said Marie Danielle Guillen, a Ph D candidate at the University of Tsukuba's Graduate School of Systems and Information Engineering.

"If I had chosen the United States, the chance that I'd go back and work in the Philippines might be lower. Most of my friends [who studied] in the US never returned," she said.

Guillen, 32, is into policy and planning sciences—a field that trains students in the application of appropriate techniques for dealing with various social phenomena and/or policymaking.

"I do plan to work in the Philippines and hopefully apply what I've learned from my graduate studies. Five years from now, hopefully I'll be back," she said.

Community of scholars

Jane Romero, 32, also hopes to return home in five years despite the fact that her scholarship grant does not require her to render public service in the Philippines.

Romero is scheduled to complete her Ph D in civil engineering at Tokohu University's Regional and Urban Planning Laboratory in September.

"I resigned from my previous job before coming here, so it will be back to square one for me. If I'm not needed [in the Philippines], I'd have to check options of working [elsewhere]. But I hope that after five years, I'll be back in Manila with not just a paper Ph D but also valuable work experience to share," she said.

At first, Romero was not sure of pursuing further studies. But when she attended a conference in Chiba in October 2002, she was inspired by friends who had moved on to graduate studies.

"They seemed happy and encouraging, so in April 2003 I joined them, although we were scattered in different universities and in different parts of Japan," she recalled.

Guillen and Romero are both recipients of the Mombukagakusho scholarship, which provides plane tickets from the home country and back, a settling allowance upon arrival, a monthly stipend and, upon request, additional research funding.

The INQUIRER stumbled on the burgeoning community of Filipino scholars in Japan while covering the World Bank's Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics (ABCDE), which was held for the first time in Asia last week.

There were two Filipino participants at the ABCDE—Gregoria Evangelio and Charmelle Recoter, both graduate students in their 30s and both planning to return to the Philippines and to their employer, the Department of Finance, to apply what they had learned.

Evangelio is taking a master's program in public policy and taxation at Yokohama National University; Recoter is in the graduate school of business and commerce at Keio University.

Statistics

More than 2,500 Filipinos have studied in Japan since its government initiated a scholarship program for foreign students 50 years ago, according to the Japan Information and Cultural Center in Manila, which administers all state-funded scholarship applications.

Statistics from the Japanese Embassy in Manila show that there were 99 and 94 Filipino scholars in Japan in 2005 and 2004, respectively.

The state-funded scholarship system for foreign students covers seven programs provided for: Research students, trainee teachers, scholarship students of the Young Leader's Program, undergraduates, Japanese studies/culture studies students, College of Technology students, and Senshu-gakko (special training college) students.

A report from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs circulated during the ABCDE conference estimated that of the total 117,302 foreign students in 2004, 315 were Filipinos. The report indicated that the Filipino student community in Japan was the sixth biggest.

On the other hand, China had the biggest number (1,810) of citizens studying in Japan, followed by Thailand (622), Indonesia (600), Vietnam (530) and Bangladesh (440).

But while Japan offers more scholarship opportunities now than most other First World countries, getting accepted into its programs is by no means a piece of cake.

On average, about 700-800 Filipino citizens apply for educational grants in Japan each year, indicating an average acceptance rate of only 12-14 percent.

Language barrier

Applying for a scholarship grant in Japan entails less requirements than applying for one in the United States.

"I only needed to fill up the forms. There were no exams then; we [only] had a panel interview," Guillen said.

But those who do get accepted have to transcend language and cultural barriers to make the most of their stay.

"In the US, [it's easy to blend in] because Filipinos are used to [American] culture. Here, it takes some adjustment," Recoter said.

The language barrier is the biggest hurdle of all.

Said Romero, sighing: "I could be a poster girl for [the movie] 'Lost in Translation.' I'd like to think that I can understand but cannot speak Nihongo, partly because I'm not really required to learn and speak the language in school. But outside, it gets me to my default mode of *pa*-smile-smile *lang* (just smiling) because I have a problem expressing what I want to say.

"It's a good thing the Japanese are very patient and appreciate the effort when I struggle with my nonexistent Nihongo skills—more like subject-verb, with a lot of animated gestures in between. So I still get to do local travels alone.

"I have Filipino friends who had no choice but learn the language, and they are doing well."

"*Hay*, if only I tried harder before."

Another challenge

Guillen took a six-month intensive course in Nihongo.

"But I think it will never be enough," she said, adding that in her case, "the other big challenge was the university entrance examination."

"It was very difficult because my undergraduate major was sociology, while the program I was entering was actually engineering. I had to take a crash course in mathematics," she said.

To cope with the difficult cultural assimilation, Filipino students in Japan tend to band together into a sub-society. They form associations and e-groups and meet up once in a while.

Meanwhile, their proficiency in English is a great advantage, allowing most of them to earn extra income as private English tutors.

US philanthropy in Asia waning

For Japan, the student exchange contributes to building close human networks and promoting mutual understanding and friendly relationships with other countries.

Taking a more active leadership role in Asia in philanthropic activities, the world's second largest economy next to the United States recognizes that higher education and research—which propelled its phenomenal post-World War II growth—should be shared on a global scale to address challenges to humankind.

Tadashi Yamamoto, president of the Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), a non-government organization dedicated to strengthening Japan's role in international networks of cooperation, said US participation in Asia had actually been waning.

During a session at the ABCDE that discussed US philanthropy as a driving force in global aid, Yamamoto said the JCIE had just completed "a major study on the role of US philanthropy in postwar imperialism."

"Frankly speaking, the role of US foundations, as far as … East Asia is concerned, is diminishing, the number of professional staff people deployed to this area has gone down, and their presence is very much lacking. In fact, the role they play in development and other efforts in this world is diminishing," he said.

Yamamoto was reacting to a paper delivered by Joseph Zimet, NGO liaison officer of the French development agency Agence Francaise de Developement, who predicted: "The world philanthropic scene will see a strengthening of the domination of American foundations, which have a more solid infrastructure."

"American philanthropy is emerging as a new global and transformational force acting at the global level," Zimet said.

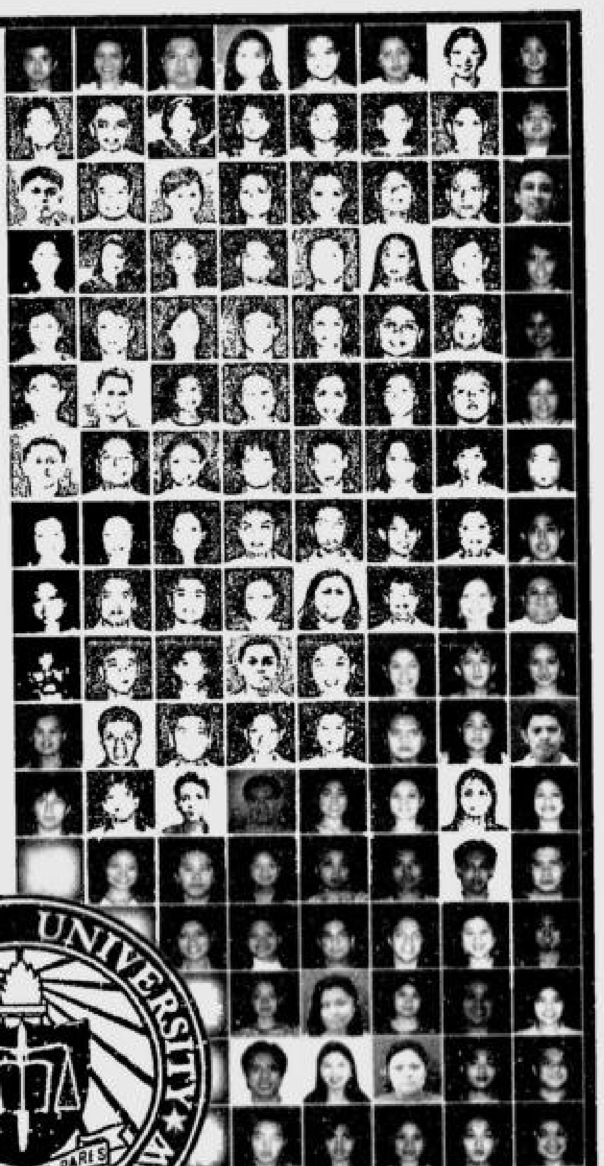
'Very small percentage'

Victoria Garchitorena, president of the Philippines' Ayala Foundation and a panelist at the ABCDE session on US philanthropy, appeared to agree with Yamamoto.

"Certainly, we welcome the idea that American foundations are looking more globally as far as the issues of poverty are concerned," Garchitorena said, adding:

"To date, it's increasing, but it's still a very small percentage of US foundations that look beyond their borders. In fact one of the problems we see in the foundation landscape is that most of them prefer to focus on their own backyard, not even beyond their cities or states, much less to other countries in the world.

"We would like to see [Zimet's] idea becoming more accepted and integrated into their programs. The same might be true of European foundations, as most focus on their local needs."



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They committed no crimes, so why are they behind bars?

From page A1

Carrying banners that read "Zoos: Cruel Animal Prisons," they held a lunchtime rally in front of the Manila Zoo and Botanical Garden in Malate.

The protest was part of Peta's worldwide campaign against zoos as it urged the country to become the first zoo-free country in Asia.

"Zoos claim to educate people and preserve species, but they fall short on both counts," said Jamie Alarcon, researcher and designated spokesperson of Peta.

"[Zoos] only present us with a distorted view of wildlife. Visitors don't see the animals' natural behavior because the animals' natural needs—space, exercise, privacy and mental stimulation—aren't met. They just wait to be fed and basically sleep the whole day."

Zoochosis

Worse, some of the animals in the zoo, which were often "kidnapped" from the wild, suffer from "zoochosis," Alarcon said. This is when animals in zoos worldwide are driven "mad" by captivity. Big cats pace endlessly, bears and elephants sway from side to side, and giraffes twist their necks.

"Animals in the wild spend their entire lives with their close-knit families. But animals in zoos were separated from their families as babies and sentenced to an eternity of boredom, crippling loneliness, and even abuse. They spend the rest of their lives in tiny zoo cages that could never simulate their natural habitat," Alarcon explained.

Symptoms of zoochosis include repeated biting, rubbing the mouth along or sucking on the bars of a cage; continuous licking on walls, bars or gates in an enclosure; continuous walking back and forth, following the same path; unnatural twisting and rolling of the neck, often flicking the head around or bending the neck back and repeated vomiting.

Other signs that zoo animals could be disturbed are circling or walking a defined route, placing feet in exactly the same position each time; playing with and eating excrement; sitting, sometimes hugging the legs, rocking forward and back; head-bobbing and weaving; overgrooming which includes hair-plucking and self-mutilation such as tail-biting, leg chewing or head-bashing.

Elephant walk

Alarcon cited the elephant, whose social structure and natural habitat were extremely complex and couldn't possibly be duplicated in captivity.

"In the wild, elephants walk up to 48 km every day," she said.

At the Manila Zoo, the elephant lives in a concrete enclosure with a little grass. The entire zoo itself just "measures 5.5 hectares or .055 sq km," Alarcon said.

"Let's just leave animals in the wild and use zoos as sanctuaries for animals rescued from circuses, marine parks and other exploitative forms of entertainment," she said.

"We're better off watching nature documentaries, reading about animals in books or on websites, or traveling to their natural habitats," she added.

As part of Peta's campaign, members would be making the rounds of zoos in the country. The group said they were open to dialogue with city governments which usually manage the zoos.

Learning function

Sought for comment, Manila Zoo administrator Dr. Romulo Bernardo said zoos have an important educational function.

"By seeing animals up close, you get to appreciate and understand them. You don't get the same experience by just watching them on TV or reading about them in books," Bernardo said.

"Children need to see animals up close in order to appreciate them and work for their conservation, especially the endangered species," he added.

He said the Manila Zoo had been around since 1959. Over the years, the zoo had undergone changes and improvements to meet international standards.

"We try to provide animals with structures as close as possible to their natural habitat," he said, adding that the zoo also serves as a rescue center for unwanted animals and exotic pets.

Sanctuary

A lot of animals, including birds and snakes, had been turned over to the zoo because they had been injured, Bernardo said.

Most zoos are centers for captive breeding, essential for the animals' continuing survival, he added.

"In fact, most animals you see in the zoos are products of captive breeding. They have never lived in the wild, therefore, they can't survive in the wild. These animals are vanishing in the wild because they've lost their habitats. You can actually see more animals in the zoo than in their natural habitats," Bernardo said.

'You can do . . .

From page A1

over with excitement.

A Filipino doctor involved in the US mission removed the white gauze bandages and asked if she could see anything.

"Nothing, nothing yet," she mumbled. The first thing she wanted to see, according to her, were "the faces of people who did this favor for me."

Harun, who comes from a dirt-poor farming family, said it was her first-ever hospital visit. She almost didn't make the trip because she could not afford to travel from her home just a few kilometers away.

The same crushing poverty that has helped send recruits to the al-Qaida-linked Abu Sayyaf bandits on Jolo island is now prompting hundreds of villagers to welcome a US campaign to wean ordinary folk from Islamic extremism through humanitarian missions.

About 100 US troops have been stationed for several months on the predominantly Muslim island, which has bitter memories of a brutal American occupation in the early 1900s. American soldiers have been fixing roads, building schools and wells and improving the infrastructure on the island.

Such an approach helps the United States improve its image in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries, regarded as breeding grounds for Islamic militants.

Extra-tight security

US Pacific commander Adm. William Fallon flew under extra-tight security to Jolo on Monday to visit American troops involved in relief work, including those aboard the hospital ship USNS Mercy.

"I can see a long line of people from the helicopter," Fallon told reporters at the Jolo Station Hospital, where hundreds of poor villagers, many with babies and children, scrambled to get free medicine and treatment for ailments like malaria and tuberculosis.

"Our aim is to set those conditions so the terrorists don't have any place to put down roots and people will say they'd much rather do things that are useful . . . than to support terrorism," he said.

US medical personnel and aid workers from the Mercy have provided free medical services in three Jolo hospitals shielded by concertina wire, treating 300-500 patients a day. Some patients have been flown to the ship for more complicated surgery, according to US Air Force Maj. Anne Carbowski.

But even with their gentle approach, American troops have to grapple with the danger, costs and opposition in the turbulent island of Jolo.

Abu Sayyaf bandits have launched deadly bombings and have plotted attacks against Philippine and American troops, according to military officials. The bandits are demanding that all Americans withdraw.

Waving villagers

For security reasons, Fallon's visit to Jolo was not announced publicly and the huge, white-hulled Mercy was anchored far from the island.

A US military convoy en route to a hospital on Monday, however, was met by waving villagers and one critic.

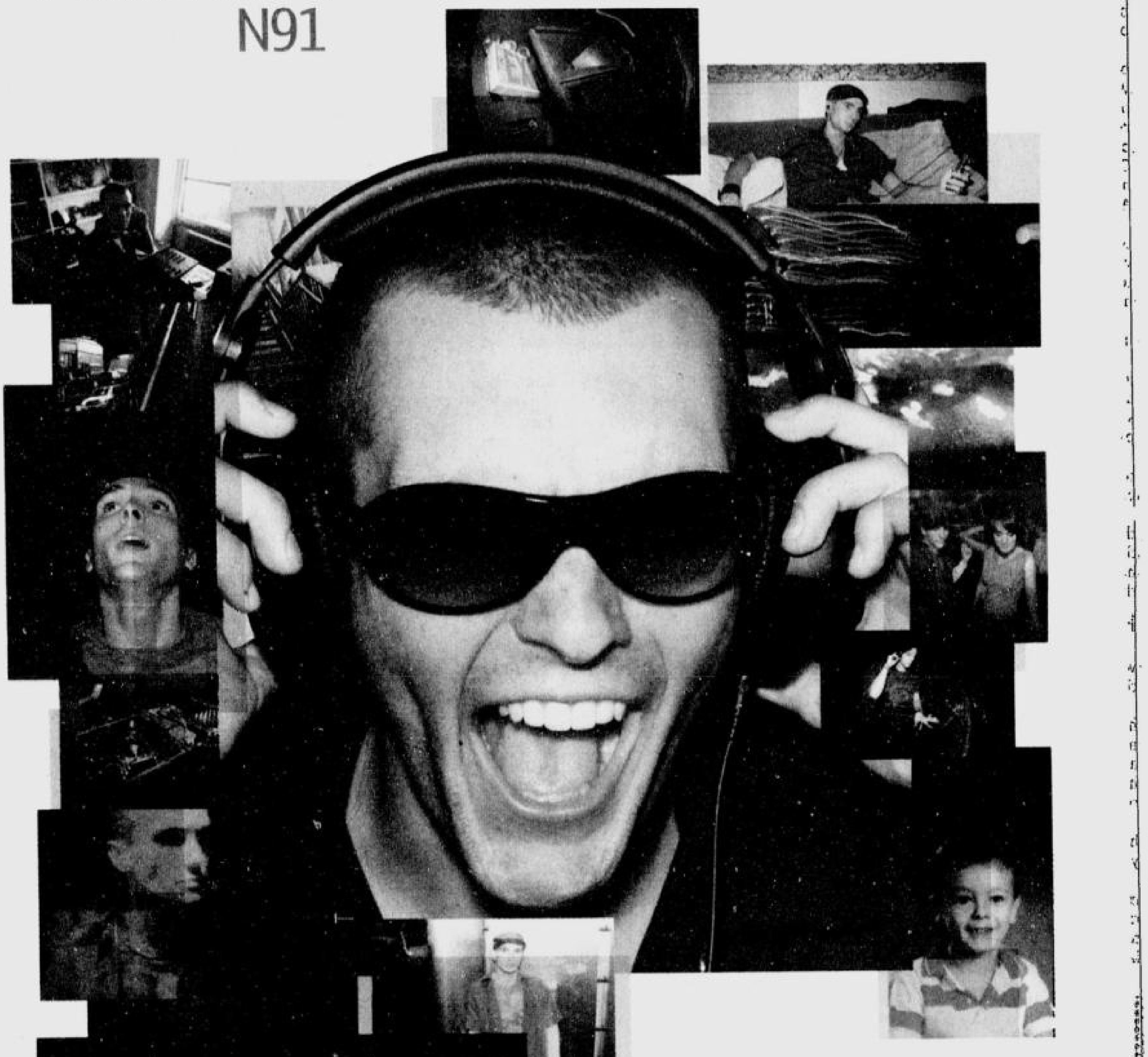
"I like the Americans because they're giving us medical attention," said Ayang Sahibudin, a frail-looking housewife who had been coughing blood. "The Abu Sayyaf only bring violence and fear in our town."

Michael Ray Johnson, an American civic volunteer, said he was delighted to see hundreds of Jolo villagers welcoming the US relief teams.

"You can't fix everything with humanitarian work," he said. "But I think you can do much more with this, touch their hearts, than you can with a gun."

Even so, the recent arrival of the American medical ship offering aid to the poor is seen by some as a ploy to win local Muslim support.

The ship's captain, Bradley Martin, has been forced to publicly defend his presence there. "It's a humanitarian mission and nothing else," he told Agence France Presse. *Reports from AP and AFP*



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Deadlock brings gov't closer …

From page A1

she preferred a reenacted 2005 budget over a stripped-down 2006 budget.

"I really can't do anything if they destroy my budget," said the President in a rare interview on dzMM.

The House approved a P1.040-trillion budget in early April. After days of interpellation, the Senate passed a leaner P1.027-trillion budget on Thursday by slashing "pork barrel" items.

Free for realignment

Senate President Franklin Drilon said a reenacted budget would be "bad for the economy."

Under a reenacted budget, the President will enjoy a "lot of flexibility" in fund disbursements because many of the items in the 2005 budget are now free for realignment, Drilon said.

A fund becomes available for realignment after the project for which it is originally allocated has been completed.

Senator Arroyo said a reenacted budget would limit the government to using past allocations for "new needs" this year, and prevent it from using new revenues for new projects.

He worried about the money collected from the 12-percent expanded value-added tax.

"There's more money [in the new budget] because of the e-VAT. That's not covered in the 2005 budget, and the President can't go beyond that. So what will you do with the money? It's better that we utilize that for basic services so the people will benefit," Arroyo said.

His fellow panel member, Sen. Ralph Recto, conceded that it would be tough to pass a budget this week even as he raised the possibility of the President calling a special session to do this. "I don't think anyone wants a special session," Recto said.

Special session opposed

The President said she was against calling a special session.

"I would probably not call for a special session. We will only waste government funds and long hours with another protracted debate. We'd rather do what we can with the current budget," Ms Arroyo said.

As of press time, there was no word if the Senate and House panels, led by Sen. Manuel "Manny" Villar Jr. and Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, respectively, would meet last night.

The bicameral conference abruptly adjourned at around 9:30 p.m. Monday after less than an hour of meeting at the Philippine Coconut Authority in Quezon City that saw the senators and congressmen tangling over one issue—the cuts made by the Senate.

As far as Pacific Ocean

The senators stood by their version that slashed P26 billion from the budget's programmed funds and P37 billion from the unprogrammed funds. The congressmen insisted that all the cuts be restored.

A heated debate erupted 20 minutes into the closed-door proceedings, prompting Villar to call for a break and for both panels to go into separate executive sessions. After 30 minutes, the lawmakers returned to the executive lounge only to adjourn the conference.

Drilon said it was "difficult" for him to say if there was any room for compromise, but he and Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. remained optimistic a "compromise budget" would be passed.

The House of Representatives is now open to a reenacted budget scenario this year.

"With personalities and politics coming into play, our positions are further apart as the Pacific Ocean where before it was just the South China Sea," Salceda said of the two panels.

Salceda, also chair of the House appropriations committee, said at a press conference that "reenactment is now a clear and present danger," pointing out that the panel members couldn't even set a date for the "next engagement."

"The only date we are aware of is Thursday which is the end of the session," said Salceda, who quickly blamed the impasse on politics rearing its ugly head.

Too much bad blood

"There's too much bad blood between the President and the Senate," said Salceda, pointing out that the 2006 budget was a hostage to the political crisis that continues to hound the country.

He said the poor were the biggest losers. "It would be a big blow to the gross domestic product and poverty reduction. The House strategy of gradual restoration of the P1.053-trillion has been blocked by the China wall of the senators."

Salceda attributed the disagreements over the P60 billion slashed by the Senate to the conflicting approaches employed by both panels.

Salceda said that during Monday's bicameral conference, the Senate wanted a "scrap-and-build approach," or to "agree on details first before agreeing to an aggregate (total) amount."

This position was opposed by the House panel.

Salceda said the Senate approach was "illogical" because "the cake is easier to cut if we have the cake. Otherwise, if you do that (Senate approach), you tend to miss out on efficiencies in budget allocation."

'Kilos Asenso'

The President remained hopeful that the senators at the conference would soften their stance and reinsert the items they had cut from the budget, specifically the P3-billion Kilos Asenso Support Fund and the P3.69-billion Kalayaan Barangay Fund.

She defended the financing programs the senators had dubbed as a virtual pork barrel of the Palace for Charter change.

"Kilos Asenso is the counterpart of the national government's programs with the local government such as for buying more land for agribusinesses, financing for micro entrepreneurs, and other projects that would benefit the common Filipino.

"The Kalayaan Barangay will be used to bring government support to far-flung, depressed areas so that residents will not turn into rebels," the President said.

She said these were ways to enable the gains from fiscal reforms to reach the poorest of the poor.

Upbeat

Drilon and Pimentel were also upbeat that the budget would be passed.

"We will try to finish the budget. It's too early to say what will happen. We'll try to pass the budget," Drilon said.

It was Drilon who initiated hearings of the Senate committee of the whole on the budget in mid-November last year to offset the delay in the House transmittal of the measure.

"I still believe that both panels can come to a reasonable agreement; and I think that we'll be able to approve the budget with cuts," Pimentel said, pointing out that the "hardening of positions" at the beginning was not uncommon.

"All part of growing pains. Or better still, part of labor pains. The budget will be delivered in a compromise manner. Not one side can claim total victory," he said.

Senator Arroyo said the stalemate underscored the perception that the President had the final say on crucial matters, including the budget.

"The difficulty of the problem that both Houses face presents one clear picture, which is that the President holds the levers of power when it comes to the budget. What she wants, she will get," he said.

Smart little girl

If the budget is passed, Ms Arroyo could disapprove it, and fall back on a reenacted budget, or approve it with certain amendments, the senator said.

Asked if this was a win-win situation for the President, Arroyo said: "Well, it looks that way. That little girl is really smart. She has operated very smoothly. Faced with crisis after crisis, then in the face of budget, she will still have her final say."

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INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids will be accepted by the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC), the Liquidator, thru the Receivership and Liquidation (R/L) Real and Other Properties Owned or Acquired (ROPOA) Disposal Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee") on the following dates and venue:

Area where the properties are located	Date/Time of Opening of Bids	Venue
Bicol Region	June 27, 2006/2:00 pm	Ibalong Conference Room located at the City Hall Compound, Legaspi City
Outside Bicol Region	July 4, 2006/2:00 pm	6/F PDIC Training Room PDIC, 2228 Chino Roces Avenue, Makati City

for the sale of properties of closed banks subject to the terms and conditions specified below. Prospective buyers are enjoined to inspect the following listed properties before participating in the public bidding.

CODE	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	TITLE / TD	MIN. BID PRICE (P)
JUNE 27, 2006				
BANCO RURAL SORSOGON, INC.				
06-06-01	Sorsogon City	400 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2-A-4 Brgy. Guinlajon, West Guinlajon	T-48845^{be}	140,000.00
06-06-02	Sorsogon	148 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-25 Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42402^{be}	51,800.00
06-06-03	Sorsogon	148 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-26, Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42403^{be}	51,800.00
06-06-04	Sorsogon	132 sqm, vacant corner residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-51 Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42428^{be}	50,820.00
06-06-05	Sorsogon	143 sqm, vacant corner residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-52, Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42429^{be}	55,055.00
06-06-06	Sorsogon	148 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-53 Sto. Niño Subd Brgy Cogon, Juban	T-42430^{be}	51,800.00
06-06-07	Sorsogon	161 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-54 Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42431^{be}	56,350.00
06-06-08	Sorsogon	173 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-55, Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42432^{be}	60,550.00
06-06-09	Sorsogon	186 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-56, Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42433^{be}	65,100.00
06-06-10	Sorsogon	198 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-57, Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42434^{be}	69,300.00
06-06-11	Sorsogon	148 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-32, Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42409^{be}	51,800.00
06-06-12	Sorsogon	148 sqm, residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-27, Sto. Niño Subd., Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-42404^{be}	51,800.00
06-06-13	Sorsogon City	411 sqm, corner residential lot, Lot 007/10, Brgy. Rizal, West District	ARP # 1999-14026-0304^{bceg}	82,200.00
06-06-14	Sorsogon	269 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 1-H, Brgy. Salvacion, Sta. Magdalena	T-31296^{bce}	134,500.00
06-06-15	Albay	287 sqm., residential, Lot 6035-J, Brgy. Penafrancia, Daraga	117184^{bce}	143,500.00
06-06-16	Sorsogon	194 sqm, residential lot, Lot 2430 Brgy. San Roque, Bulusan	OCT P-9860^{bce}	155,200.00
06-06-17	Sorsogon City	693 sqm, interior residential lot, Lot 1449-E Brgy. Basud, West District	T-46710^{be}	207,900.00
06-06-18	Sorsogon City	392 sqm, residential lot, Lot 7137-G Purok 3 Brgy. Cambulaga, West District	T-55354^{ce}	235,200.00
06-06-19(2)	Sorsogon City	231 sqm, residential lot, Lot 3225, Divina Street (interior), Brgy. Talisay, West District	T-22578^{be}	184,800.00
06-06-20(2)	Sorsogon City	200 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1107-F, San Isidro, Bacon District	T-40578^{be}	80,000.00
06-06-21(2)	Sorsogon City	200 sqm, residential, Lot 1107-D, San Isidro, Bacon District	T-40576^{be}	80,000.00
06-06-22(2)	Sorsogon City	200 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1107-C, San Isidro, Bacon District	T-40575^{be}	80,000.00
06-06-23(2)	Sorsogon City	203 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1107-B, San Isidro, Bacon District	T-40574^{bce}	81,200.00
06-06-24(2)	Sorsogon City	300 sqm, residential lot, Lot 4596-C, Brgy. Buhatan, East District	T-33573^{be}	150,000.00
06-06-25(2)	Sorsogon City	190 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1107-H, San Isidro, Bacon District	T-40580^{bce}	76,000.00
06-06-26(2)	Sorsogon City	200 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1107-G, San Isidro, Bacon District	T-40579^{be}	80,000.00
06-06-27(2)	Sorsogon City	336 sqm, residential lot, Lot 10 Blk 25, (El Refugio Subdivision) Brgy. Pangpang, West District	T-27970^{be}	201,600.00
06-06-28(2)	Sorsogon	443 sqm, commercial lot, Lot 1-B-2, Zone IV, Poblacion, Bulan	T-54627^{be}	5,316,000.00
06-06-29(2)	Albay	232 sqm, residential lot, Lot 2403-C, Brgy. San Roque, Daraga	T-103577^{bce}	232,000.00
06-06-30(2)	Tabaco City	588 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1 Blk 2, Brgy. San Lorenzo	T-70170^{bce}	1,176,000.00
BANCO RURAL LEGASPI, INC.				
06-06-31	Camarines Norte	798 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2180-A-5-A Brgy. Bagasbas, Daet	T-44635^{be}	399,000.00
06-06-32	Camarines Norte	309 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 21, Block 7, Brgy. Bagasbas, Daet	T-35289^{be}	154,500.00
06-06-33	Camarines Norte	258 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 948-E-3-A-2-C, Brgy. Lag-on, Daet	T-44185^{be}	258,000.00
06-06-34	Camarines Norte	477 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 1, Block 15, Brgy. VII, Poblacion, Daet	T-33616^{be}	715,500.00
06-06-35	Camarines Norte	140 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 10, Block 1, Brgy. Matacong, San Lorenzo Ruiz	T-23692^{be}	35,000.00
06-06-36	Camarines Norte	120 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 20, Block 7, Brgy San Roque, Mercedes	T-39378^{be}	60,000.00
06-06-37	Legaspi City	360 sqm, residential lot, Lot 53, Imperial Court Subdivision	38100^{be}	1,080,000.00
06-06-38	Legaspi City	200 sqm, residential lot, Lot 52-A, Imperial Court Subdivision	T-34039^{be}	600,000.00
06-06-39	Legaspi City	3,132 sqm. residential lot, Lot 7327-B, Brgy. Buyuan	15342^{bce}	156,600.00
06-06-40	Legaspi City	144 sqm, residential/commercial lot with improvements , Lot 511-B, Maria Clara Street, Ilawod	44390^{bce}	2,150,400.00
06-06-41	Albay	48 sqm. commercial lot, Lot 6804-A-11, Brgy. Allang (Francia), Ligao City	T-106569^{be}	57,600.00
06-06-42	Albay	60 sqm. residential lot, Lot 31, Poblacion (Tipon-Tipon), Camalig	T-96525^{bce}	60,000.00
06-06-43	Albay	294 sqm. residential lot, Lot 6032, Centro, Camalig	TD 002-00077^{beg}	294,000.00
06-06-44	Albay	300 sqm. residential lot with improvements Lot 16-D, Poblacion, Pioduran	T-98166^{bce}	355,920.00
06-06-45	Sorsogon City	236 sqm. residential lot with improvements, Lot 2, Block 46, Our Lady's Village, Brgy.Pangpang	T-44370^{bce}	358,000.00
06-06-46	Naga City	180 sqm. residential lot, Lot 1903-A-2, Liboton, cor. Sto. Nino St., Brgy. Penafrancia	22716^{bce}	450,000.00
06-06-47	Iriga City	1,239 sqm residential lot/orchard, Lot 5892, Brgy. San Agustin and San Isidro	OCT-474^{be}	640,500.00
06-06-48(2)	Albay	352 sqm., residential llot w/ improvements, Lot 4 Blk E-1 Virgin Valley Subdivision Peñafrancia, Daraga	T-128394^{bcf}	281,600.00
06-06-49(2)	Albay	435 sqm., residential lot, Lot 1941 Blk C-15 San Lorenzo, Baranghawon Tabaco City	T-72206^{be}	348,000.00
06-06-50(2)	Sorsogon	541 sqm., residential lot, Lot 3 Sto. Niño Subdivision, Brgy. Cogon, Juban	T-45942^{be}	189,350.00
06-06-51(2)	Sorsogon	198 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-44 Sto Niño Subdivision, Brgy. Cogon, Juban	42421^{be}	69,300.00
06-06-52(2)	Sorsogon	160 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-47 Sto. Niño Subdivision, Brgy Cogon, Juban	42424^{be}	56,000.00
06-06-53(2)	Sorsogon	196 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-45 Sto. Niño Subdivision, Brgy. Cogon, Juban	42422^{be}	65,100.00
06-06-54(2)	Sorsogon	162 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-6 Sto Niño Subdivision, Brgy. Cogon, Juban	42383^{be}	56,700.00
06-06-55(2)	Sorsogon	148 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-48 Sto. Niño Subdivision, Brgy. Cogon, Juban	42425^{be}	51,800.00
06-06-56(2)	Sorsogon	189 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-19 Sto. Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42396^{be}	66,150.00
06-06-57(2)	Sorsogon	155 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-8 Sto Nino Ville Subdivision, Juban	42385^{be}	54,250.00
06-06-58(2)	Sorsogon	135 sqm., residential lot, Lot2100-B-2-49 Sto Nino Ville Subdivision, Juban	42426^{be}	47,250.00
06-06-59(2)	Sorsogon	223 sqm., residential land, Lot 2100-B-2-42 Sto. Nino Ville Subdivision, Juban	42419^{be}	78,050.00
06-06-60(2)	Sorsogon	123 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-50 Sto. Nino Ville Subdivision, Juban	42427^{be}	43,050.00
06-06-61(2)	Sorsogon	173 sqm., residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-46 Sto. Nino Ville Subdivision, Juban	42423^{be}	60,550.00
06-06-62(2)	Sorsogon	175 sqm. residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-15 Sto. Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42392^{be}	61,250.00
06-06-63(2)	Sorsogon	236 sqm. residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-41 Sto Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42418^{be}	82,600.00
06-06-64(2)	Sorsogon	148 sqm residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-24 Sto. Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42401^{be}	51,800.00
06-06-65(2)	Sorsogon	170 sqm. residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-12 Sto Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42389^{be}	59,500.00
06-06-66(2)	Sorsogon	175 sqm. residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-16 Sto Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42393^{be}	61,250.00
06-06-67(2)	Sorsogon	301 sqm. residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-23 Sto. Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42376^{be}	120,400.00
06-06-68(2)	Sorsogon	174 sqm residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-23 Sto Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42400^{be}	60,900.00
06-06-69(2)	Sorsogon	174 sqm residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-14 Sto Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	42391^{be}	60,900.00
06-06-70(2)	Sorsogon	279 sqm residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-59-D Sto Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	46587^{be}	223,200.00
06-06-71(2)	Sorsogon	187 sqm residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-4-B Sto Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	45939^{be}	74,800.00
06-06-72(2)	Sorsogon	179 sqm residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-13 Sto. Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	T-42390^{be}	82,650.00
06-06-73(2)	Sorsogon	150 sqm residential lot, Lot 2100-B-2-7 Sto Nino Ville Subdivision Cogon, Juban	T-42384^{be}	52,500.00
06-06-74(2)	Camarines Norte	432 sqm, residential lot, Lot 2-X-6-N-1 Purok 4, Brgy 1 Mercedes	T-48335^{be}	259,200.00
RB TALISAY (CAMARINES NORTE), INC.				
06-06-75	Camarines Norte	2,038 sqm, interior residential lot, Lot 1022 pt. pls 488-D, Brgy. Lag-on, Daet	TD 020-0296^{beg}	40,760.00
06-06-76	Camarines Norte	1,321 sqm, residential lot, Lot 145 National Highway, Brgy. Pob. II, Basud	TD 002-0170^{beg}	858,650.00
RB BACACAY (ALBAY), INC.				
06-06-77	Legaspi City	260 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 10507-B, San Ramon, Puro	18024^{be}	52,000.00
06-06-78	Legaspi City	257 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 10507-A, San Ramon, Puro	18025^{be}	51,400.00
RB PILI (CAMARINES SUR), INC.				
06-06-79	Camarines Sur	272 sqm, residential lot, Lot 3 Block 4 Brgy. Vinagre, Tigaon	8503^{b}	136,000.00
RB MAGARAO (CAMARINES SUR), INC.				
06-06-80	Camarines Sur	400 sqm, residential lot, Lot 4000 Brgy. San Pedro, Cabusao	ARP- 97-007-00027^{beg}	120,000.00
06-06-81	Camarines Sur	371 sqm, residential lot, Lot 3371 Brgy. Talidtid, Canaman	ARP 97-023-157^{beg}	74,200.00
RB BOMBON (CAMARINES SUR), INC.				
06-06-82	Albay	351 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1030 Brgy. Bacolod, Libon	OCT-VM-18814^{be}	105,300.00
06-06-83	Camarines Sur	992 04 sqm, residential lot, Lot 332 Brgy. San Roque, Bombon	ARP 97-007-0589^{bceg}	307,520.00
06-06-84	Camarines Sur	320 sqm, interior residential lot, Lot 1-C-1-J-5-G-5 District of Tabuco, Naga City	25273^{bce}	480,000.00
06-06-85	Camarines Sur	116.71 sqm, residential lot, Lot 542 Zone 6, Brgy. Sta. Salud, Calabanga	ARP 97-042-0269^{bceg}	52,519.50
06-06-86	Camarines Sur	49 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1619 Bo. Taban-Fundado, Libmanan	8186^{bce}	39,200.00
06-06-87	Camarines Sur	14,978 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1-A Sitio Talisay, Brgy. Dolo, San Jose	8249^{bce}	1,497,800.00
06-06-88	Camarines Sur	124 sqm, corner residential lot, Lot 30238 Brgy. San Nicolas, Canaman	ARP 97-017-422^{bceg}	34,100.00
06-06-89	Camarines Sur	500 sqm, interior residential lot, Lot 12505-A Interior Labing-labing Street, Brgy. Sabang, Calabanga	ARP 97-025-0241^{bceg}	100,000.00
06-06-90	Camarines Sur	346 sqm, residential lot, Lot 23 Block 24 Ramos/Carolina Subd. Brgy. Vinagre, Huyon-huyon, Tigaon	T-18826^{be}	173,000.00
06-06-91	Camarines Sur	210 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 437 Brgy. Ombao, Polpog, Bula	ARP 97-016-340^{bceg}	63,000.00
06-06-92	Camarines Sur	217 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 13 Brgy. Sta. Cruz, Calabanga	21545^{bce}	65,100.00
06-06-93	Albay	1,530 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1932 Sitio Tinago, Brgy. Bacolod, Libon	PA-2087^{bce}	459,000.00
06-06-94	Camarines Sur	240 sqm, residential lot with improvements, Lot 15132 Brgy. San Vicente, Calabanga	ARP 97-037-0067 (lot) ARP 97-037-0282 (bldg)^{bceg}	440,000.00
RB BAAO (CAMARINES SUR), INC.				
06-06-95	Camarines Sur	600 sqm. residential lot, Lot 34, Brgy Tambo, Pamplona	6340^{bce}	480,000.00
06-06-96	Camarines Sur	600 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 33, Brgy Tambo, Pamplona	6339^{be}	480,000.00
06-06-97	Camarines Sur	189 sqm. residential lot, Brgy Pang-pang, Canaman	TD 6267 (ARP# 97-010-062)^{beg}	378,000.00
MAYON SAVINGS AND LOAN BANK				
06-06-98	Albay	295 sqm, residential corner lot with improvements, Lot 13 Bo. Sta. Cruz, Municipality of Ligao	T-116973^{bce}	540,500.00
06-06-99	Albay	392 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 5 Block 1 Brgy. Inamnan Pequeño, Guinobatan	T-24926^{be}	156,800.00
06-06-100(2)	Albay	900 sqm., residential lot, Lot 1038 Cabraran, Jovellar	PA-4514^{be}	720,000.00
06-06-101(2)	Sorsogon	1,400 sqm., residential lot, San Vicente, Castilla	T-15315^{be}	420,000.00
RB LIGAO (ALBAY), INC.				
06-06-102	Camarines Sur	396 sqm, residential corner lot Lot 2032-p Cor. Mabini & Valencia Sts., Brgy. 2, Garchitorena	TD 97-022-00278^{beg}	130,680.00
06-06-103	Camarines Sur	260 sqm, residential corner lot, Lot 2032 Mabini St., Brgy. II, Garchitorena	TD 97-022-00205^{beg}	78,000.00
RB PIODURAN (ALBAY), INC.				
06-06-104	Albay	375 sqm, residential lot, Lot 13 Block 11 Brgy. Caratagan, Pioduran	T-69979^{be}	150,000.00
MUNICIPAL RB OF DEL GALLEGO (CAMARINES SUR), INC.				
06-06-105	Camarines Sur	400 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 515-D-6 Brgy. Sinuknipan I, Del Gallego	TD 97-026100^{beg}	160,000.00
MASBATE RURAL BANK (MASBATE), INC.				
06-06-106	Masbate	133 sqm, residential lot Lot 2707-B (005) Brgy. San Agustin, Aroroy	TD 5973^{beg}	15,960.00
06-06-107	Masbate	261 sqm, residential lot with improvements, Poblacion, Uson	TD 6237 (5002)^{bceg}	158,500.00
06-06-108	Masbate	720 sqm, residential lot, Lot 449 (014) Tinaclipan Road, Poblacion West, Milagros	TD 002-0392 (002-0683)^{bceg}	216,000.00
06-06-109	Masbate	145 sqm, residential lot, Lot 617 (006) Fuster St., Poblacion West, Milagros	TD 002-0684^{bceg}	72,500.00
RB CANAMAN (CAMARINES SUR), INC.				
06-06-110	Camarines Sur	522 sqm, residential lot, Lot 287, Cad 993-D, case 5 Brgy San Pascual, Tinambac	33148^{be}	261,000.00
06-06-111	Camarines Sur	500 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 5, Block 1, Bo. San Ramon, Bula	582^{be}	100,000.00
06-06-112	Camarines Sur	210 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 19-B, Brgy. Vinagre, Tigaon	28162^{be}	84,000.00
06-06-113	Albay	938 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 1238-G, Brgy. Bonbon, Tabaco City	T-101354^{bef}	656,600.00
06-06-114	Camarines Sur	1,000 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot B-2-B, Brgy New Moriones, Ocampo	20065^{be}	250,000.00
06-06-115	Camarines Sur	1,000 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot B-2-A, Brgy. Moriones, Ocampo	20656^{be}	250,000.00
06-06-116	Camarines Sur	450 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 17, Blk. 15, La Paz Subd., Bo. Anayan, Pili	T-4068^{be}	270,000.00
06-06-117	Camarines Sur	450 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 2245-B, Brgy. Bagumbayan, Libmanan	T-28379^{be}	315,000.00
RB TIWI (ALBAY), INC.				
06-06-118	Albay	269 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 15 Block 8, Sevel Subdivision Sipi, Daraga	T-69570^{a}	322,800.00
06-06-119	Legaspi City	146 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 5755-C-5-H Brgy Arimbay	28371^{a}	65,700.00
06-06-120	Legaspi City	150 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 5755-C-5-I Brgy Arimbay	28372^{a}	67,500.00
06-06-121	Albay	230 sqm, vacant interior residential lot, Lot 6661-C-11 Brgy. Baclayon, Bacacay	TD 2002-02-015-00443^{beg}	57,500.00
RB TABACO (ALBAY), INC.				
06-06-122	Albay	300 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 10 Brgy Tuburan, Ligao City	T-28266^{a}	150,000.00
06-06-123	Albay	494 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 12 Brgy Tuburan, Ligao City	T-28268^{a}	247,000.00
06-06-124	Albay	300 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 21 Brgy. Tuburan, Ligao City	T-28277^{b}	120,000.00
06-06-125	Albay	572 sqm, vacant interior residential lot, Lot 196-C Brgy Sto. Cristo, Tabaco	T-60703^{b}	200,200.00
06-06-126	Albay	696 sqm, residential lot, Lot 3922 Brgy. San Antonio, Tabaco	T-56634^{be}	208,800.00
06-06-127	Albay	300 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 5 Block 6 Brgy. San Lorenzo, Tabaco	T-28531^{a}	180,000.00
RB LABO (CAMARINES NORTE), INC.				
06-06-128	Camarines Norte	381 sqm, interior residential lot, Embarcadero Sta. Cruz, Vinzons	TD 4304^{beg}	57,150.00
06-06-129(2)	Camarines Norte	240 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 7 Blk 1 Villa Maria Subd , Brgy Burabod, Daet	T-16176^{be}	192,000.00
06-06-130(2)	Camarines Norte	300 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 12 B-1 Brgy. Gumamela, Labo	T-17970^{be}	165,000.00
06-06-131(2)	Camarines Norte	390 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 8 Brgy. Malacong, San Lorenzo Ruiz	TD 2529^{beg}	78,000.00
06-06-132(2)	Camarines Norte	423 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 19 Brgy. Malacong, San Lorenzo Ruiz	TD 2530^{beg}	84,600.00
06-06-133(2)	Camarines Norte	493 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 20 Brgy. Malacong, San Lorenzo Ruiz	TD 2531^{beg}	98,600.00
06-06-134(2)	Camarines Norte	497 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 24-F-2-L, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-14459^{be}	173,950.00
06-06-135(2)	Camarines Norte	300 sqm, residential lot, Lot 12 Block 5 Manlapaz Subd., Brgy. Gumamela (formerly Bakiad), Labo	T-22110^{be}	165,000.00
06-06-136(2)	Camarines Norte	158 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 1 Block 2, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24355^{be}	55,300.00
06-06-137(2)	Camarines Norte	161 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 2 Block 2, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24356^{be}	56,350.00
06-06-138(2)	Camarines Norte	161 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 3 Block 2, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24357^{be}	56,350.00
06-06-139(2)	Camarines Norte	161 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 4 Block 2, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24358^{be}	56,350.00
06-06-140(2)	Camarines Norte	160 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 5 Block 2, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24359^{be}	56,000.00
06-06-141(2)	Camarines Norte	217 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 6 Block 2, Poblacion. Sta Elena	T-24360^{be}	75,950.00
06-06-142(2)	Camarines Norte	230 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 7 Block 2, Poblacion, Sta Elena	T-24361^{be}	80,500.00
06-06-143(2)	Camarines Norte	158 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 1 Block 1, Poblacion, Sta Elena	T-24362^{be}	55,300.00
06-06-144(2)	Camarines Norte	160 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 2 Block 1, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24363^{be}	56,000.00
06-06-145(2)	Camarines Norte	160 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 3 Block 1, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24364^{be}	56,000.00
06-06-146(2)	Camarines Norte	160 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 4 Block 1, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24365^{be}	56,000.00
06-06-147(2)	Camarines Norte	182 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 5 Block 1, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24366^{be}	63,700.00
06-06-148(2)	Camarines Norte	176 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 6 Block 1, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24367^{be}	61,600.00
06-06-149(2)	Camarines Norte	207sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 7 Block 1, Poblacion, Sta. Elena	T-24368^{be}	72,450.00
PACIFIC BANKING CORPORATION				
06-06-151	Albay	300 sqm, vacant residential subdivision lot, Lot 4, Blk 9 Brgy Naga, Tiwi	T-45062^{bf}	75,000.00
JULY 4, 2006				
PACIFIC BANKING CORPORATION				
06-06-150	Davao City	386 sqm, residential lot, Lot A,Brgy Dumoy, Talomo District	T-92475^{a}	386,000.00
06-06-152	Bacolod City	1,000 sqm, residential subdivision lot with improvements. Lot 4. Blk 14 Saturn St., Puntobella Subd	T-268115^{be}	600,000.00
MOLAVE RURAL BANK (ZAMBOANGA DEL SUR), INC.				
06-06-153	Zamboanga del Sur	297 sqm, interior residential lot Lot 343-D-25 Brgy. Sta. Clara Crossing, Naga, Zamboanga Sibugay	T-19369^{bc}	44,550.00
RB ABRA DE ILOG, INC.				
06-06-154	Occidental Mindoro	216 sqm, bank premises, Lot 4-A-1 Vasquez St., Poblacion (formerly Barrio Lawaan), Abra de Ilog	T-10331^{be}	209,600.00
RB LILIO (LAGUNA), INC.				
06-06-155	Rizal	235 sqm, vacant residential and lot, Lot 2 Block 3, San Miguel Subdivision, Brgy Muzon, Taytay	559735^{a}	352,500.00
06-06-156	Laguna	149 sqm, residential lot, Lot 2208, Cad 427-D Barangay San Roque, Poblacion, Victoria	T-228259^{a}	223,500.00
06-06-157	Laguna	133 sqm, residential lot with improvements, Laot A-1,Barangay IV, Poblacion, Sta. Cruz	T-220744^{ae}	968,800.00
06-06-158	Laguna	102 sqm. residential lot, Lot 449 J. Calles St. Barangay II, Poblacion, Sta. Cruz	T-228258^{a}	612,000.00
06-06-159	Caloocan City	300 sqm, vacant residential lot Lot 9 Block 25 Road 44 St., Congress Village, Brgy. Bagumbong	220914^{ah}	540,000.00
06-06-160	Laguna	200 sqm, vacant residential lot, Lot 1077-E, Brgy. Magdapio, Pagsanjan	TD 99-19-011-00665^{aeg}	80,000.00
06-06-161	Laguna	273 sqm, interior residential lot, Lot 8583-G-1 Brgy. Bungkol, Liliw	T-98656^{b}	136,500.00
06-06-162	Laguna	500 sqm, residential lot, Lot 1267-pl, Barangay of Sto. Angel Central, Sta. Cruz	TD 00616^{beg}	400,000.00
06-06-163	Laguna	215 sqm, residential lot, Lot 3, Barangay Sto. Angel Central, Sta. Cruz	T-142959^{b}	430,000.00
RB VICTORIA (LAGUNA), INC.				
06-06-164	Laguna	286 sqm, residential lot, Lot 727, Cad 427-D A. Herradura St., Brgy. Nanhaya, Victoria	OCT P-7545^{bc}	429,000.00
06-06-165	Laguna	274 sqm, residential lot, Lot 711, Cad 427-D A. Herradura St., Brgy. Nanhaya, Victoria	OCT P-3146^{bc}	411,000.00
06-06-166	Laguna	269 sqm/18 sqm (two parcels), residential lot with improvements, Lot 1574/1575 M.L.Quezon Street, Poblacion, Victoria	O-2436^{bc}	723,500.00

a - consolidated
b - redemption period lapsed but title not yet transferred in the name of the bank
c - with lessee/ tenants/ informal dwellers/caretaker
e - with unpaid realty taxes
f - with Notice of Tax Lien
g - untitled
h - original owner's copy of TCT missing; for reconstitution
j - with Notice of Levy/adverse claims
l - no right of way

CONDITIONS OF BID

1. The sale shall be for CASH and on "As-Is" basis. The amount of bid shall not be lower than the minimum bid price.
2. The Liquidator sells only whatever rights, interest and participation the banks have on the property/ies and the bidder is charged with full knowledge of the nature and extent of said rights, interest and participation. The bidder acknowledges that he/she has examined the property/ies and accepts disclaimer of any warranty, implied or otherwise.
3. The bidder represents to have full knowledge of any and all unpaid real property taxes due on the properties and holds him/herself solely liable for the payment thereof.
4. Bids shall be accepted from Filipino citizens only. If the bidder is a corporation, association, partnership or other form of organization, Filipino ownership must be at least sixty percent (60%). In the latter case, the bid form shall be accompanied by a certified copy of the organization's certificate of registration.

   In cases where the documents submitted by a lone bidder are deficient, the Committee may at its discretion declare the bid the most advantageous and allow the bidder to complete the deficiency not later than 5:00 p.m. of the day following the bidding date; otherwise, the bid deposit shall be forfeited.
5. The bid proposal must be in the prescribed form and shall be signed by the bidder as follows:
   a. In case of individual bidders, the bidder him/herself shall sign the bid proposal or his/her representative duly authorized in a Special Power of Attorney (SPA) executed by the bidder and attached to the bid proposal. Proposals coming from organizations not registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission shall be considered as individual offers, with all the officers/ members signing the offer and deciding as one.
   b. In case of duly registered corporations, associations, partnerships and other forms of organization, the person duly designated by the Board of Directors or the Partners to act for and on behalf of the organization with full powers and authority to participate in the bidding shall sign the bid proposal. The Secretary's Certificate executed by the corporate/board secretary, or its equivalent, shall be attached to the bid proposal.

   In cases where the documents submitted by a lone bidder are defective, the Committee may at its discretion declare the bid the most advantageous and allow the bidder to correct the defect not later than 5:00 p.m. of the day following the bidding date; otherwise, the bid deposit shall be forfeited.
6. Each bid shall be accompanied by a bond/deposit equivalent to at least ten percent (10%) of the submitted bid, which shall be in the form of Cash or Manager's/ Cashier's Check payable to Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation for the account of the bank/s under liquidation. Bids whose bond/deposit are in the form of personal and/or corporate checks shall be disqualified. The bid bond/deposit shall be non-interest bearing.
7. The bid proposal form, together with the signed Conditions of Bid, the bid bond/ deposit and the required attachments must be in a sealed envelope and addressed to the R/L ROPOA Disposal Committee. The sealed envelope must have the bidder's signature across its flap. Bids shall be accepted starting at 9:00 a.m (PDIC time) but not later than 1:55 p.m. (PDIC time) on June 27 and July 4, 2006, for the Bicol Region and Metro Manila bidding, respectively. There shall be no extension on the submission of bids.
8. Withdrawal/cancellation of bids shall not be allowed the moment the bidding is declared open. Bids shall be opened in the presence of the attending bidders or their authorized representatives. All bids below the minimum bid price shall be disqualified immediately after the opening.
9. In the event of a tie for the highest bid, the Committee will resort to an open bidding (viva voce) on the same day to be participated in by the tied bidders only.
   - 9.1 The viva voce bidding shall start not later than one and a half hours after the main public bidding.
   - 9.2 The starting bid price in the viva voce bidding shall be equivalent to the tied price plus one thousand pesos (P1,000.00).
   - 9.3 After the first open/verbal bid is made, the Chairperson, who shall act as the Bid Master, adds the increment required and asks the tied bidders if there is a bid at the new price. A bidder raises his/her hand if he/she wants to make a bid at the new price announced by the Bid Master.
   - 9.4 The incremental bid, which is the amount to be added to the last bid price, shall not be less than P500.00.
   - 9.5 The process continues until the last bid is declared winner in the open bidding after the Bid Master has counted three times after the announcement of the last bid price
   - 9.6 The winning bidder in the viva voce bidding shall pay additional bid deposit equivalent to 10% of the difference between the last bid price and the tied bid. The additional bid deposit shall be paid immediately or not later than 5:00 p.m. of the following day, June 28 and July 5, 2006, for the Bicol Region and Metro Manila bidding, respectively, and may be remitted through the PDIC on-line collection system with the Philippine National Bank.

     Failure to pay the additional bid deposit shall result in the cancellation of the award and forfeiture of all payments made in favor of the bank.
   - 9.7 All other provisions in the Conditions of Bid for the main bidding shall apply to the viva voce bidding.
10. If there is only one complying bid, the Committee shall declare the lone bid as the winning bid.

    A complying bid is the bid that meets the minimum bid price, accompanied by the required bid deposit in Cash or Manager's/Cashier's Check, and all the other conditions stated herein.
11. The Certificate of Award shall be issued by the Committee to the winning bidder after the public bidding.
12. The winning bidder shall pay the balance of the bid price, after application of the bid bond/ deposit, not later than July 4 and July 11, 2006, for the Bicol Region and Metro Manila bidding, respectively. If the winning bidder fails to pay the balance within the said period, the award shall automatically be cancelled and his/her bid bond/deposit forfeited in favor of the bank.

    The bid bond/deposit of the losing bidder/s shall be returned as soon as possible after the bidding.
13. A "Deed of Absolute Sale" covering the property/ies sold shall be executed within ten (10) working days from receipt of full payment of the purchase price.
14. The winning bidder shall respect the leasehold rights existing on the property/ies, if any, including the required period of notice of termination of the lease contract.
15. The winning bidder shall assume the payment of appropriate taxes, fees, charges and expenses in connection with the sale of the property/ies and the transfer of the title to the winning bidder including, but not limited to, capital gains tax, creditable withholding tax, documentary stamp tax, notarial fees, registration expenses, legal and research fund fees, entry fees and such other fees and expenses incidental to the execution and registration of the Absolute Deed of Sale.
16. All accrued taxes and charges on the property/ies, and those accruing after receipt of the Certificate of Award, which shall be issued on the day of the bidding, such as, but not limited to, realty taxes, electric and water bills, as well as special assessments, shall be for the account of the winning bidder.
17. The winning bidder shall undertake the responsibility of acquiring and maintaining peaceful possession and enjoyment of the property without seeking the assistance of PDIC.
18. For real estate properties whose titles are not yet transferred in the name of the bank, consolidation of title shall be undertaken by the winning bidder and expenses for the same shall be for his/her account.
19. The Committee reserves the right to reject any or all bids; to accept the bid most advantageous to the bank; and to amend any of the above conditions or waive any formality in the bidding process as it sees fit at any time prior to the submission of sealed bids. The Committee likewise reserves the right to withdraw any of the properties from the bidding at any time before 2:00 p.m. (PDIC time) on June 27 and July 4, 2006, for the Bicol Region and Metro Manila public bidding, respectively.
20. Violation of or non-compliance with the above conditions shall disqualify a bid, unless otherwise provided under paragraph 4 & 5 hereof.
21. All decisions of the Committee shall be final and may not be subject of appeal

Bid forms and copies of the Conditions of Bid may be secured free of charge from the following:

Metro Manila bidding	abovecited PDIC address
Bicol Region bidding	
Evelyn de Guzman	G/F King's Bldg 3, Rizal & Elizondo Sts., Brgy. No. 30 Legaspi City (in front of PNB Legaspi)
Asuncion Sagul	Banco Rural Sorsogon, Rizal St., Sorsogon City
Beth Subang	RB Canaman, Baras, Canaman, Camarines Sur
Eleuterio Caceres	RB Talisay, Poblacion, Talisay, Camarines Norte

For further information, interested bidders may call telephone number 841-4000 local 4729, 28 or 31. In case of occurrence of flood, storm or other natural calamities that may result in the cancellation of holding the public bidding on the published date, such public bidding shall be held on the next working day at the same time and venue.

RL ROPOA DISPOSAL COMMITTEE

(PDI- June 7 & 15, 2006)

Pagasa sees 21 more storms coming this year

By Leila B. Salaverria

UP TO 21 TROPICAL CYCLONES are expected to enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) in the second half of the year, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

But Pagasa weather bureau chief Nathaniel Cruz yesterday said that not all of the 14 to 21 tropical cyclones predicted to come under the PAR from June to December would actually pass through the Philippines.

Cruz said the Philippines identifies all the cyclones that fall under the PAR even though they might not pass through the country in order to give authorities time to prepare for them.

He said more cyclones were expected to enter the PAR from June to September, but these were more likely to miss the Philippines because of the southwest monsoon, which pushes cyclones away from the country.

Pagasa expects two to three cyclones to enter the PAR in June and September, while three to four cyclones would enter the country's area of responsibility in July and August.

"From June to September, most of the cyclones don't hit us because of the southwest monsoon that pushes the storms toward Taiwan, Japan and China," he told reporters yesterday at a disaster preparedness conference of the Philippine National Red Cross.

But he also warned that even though the cyclones were not likely to pass through the Philippines, they could aggravate the southwest monsoon and thus still bring more rains to the country.

"We should also be careful during this period because the storms affect the southwest monsoon," he said.

Cruz said cyclones that enter the PAR from June to August usually affect northern Luzon, while those that come in September are expected to affect northern and Central Luzon.

On the other hand, Cruz said, fewer cyclones were expected from October to December but these were more likely to pass through the Philippines because then the northeast monsoon would be prevailing over the southwest monsoon.

In October, Pagasa expects two or three cyclones to enter the PAR, while only one or two cyclones would come under it in November and December.

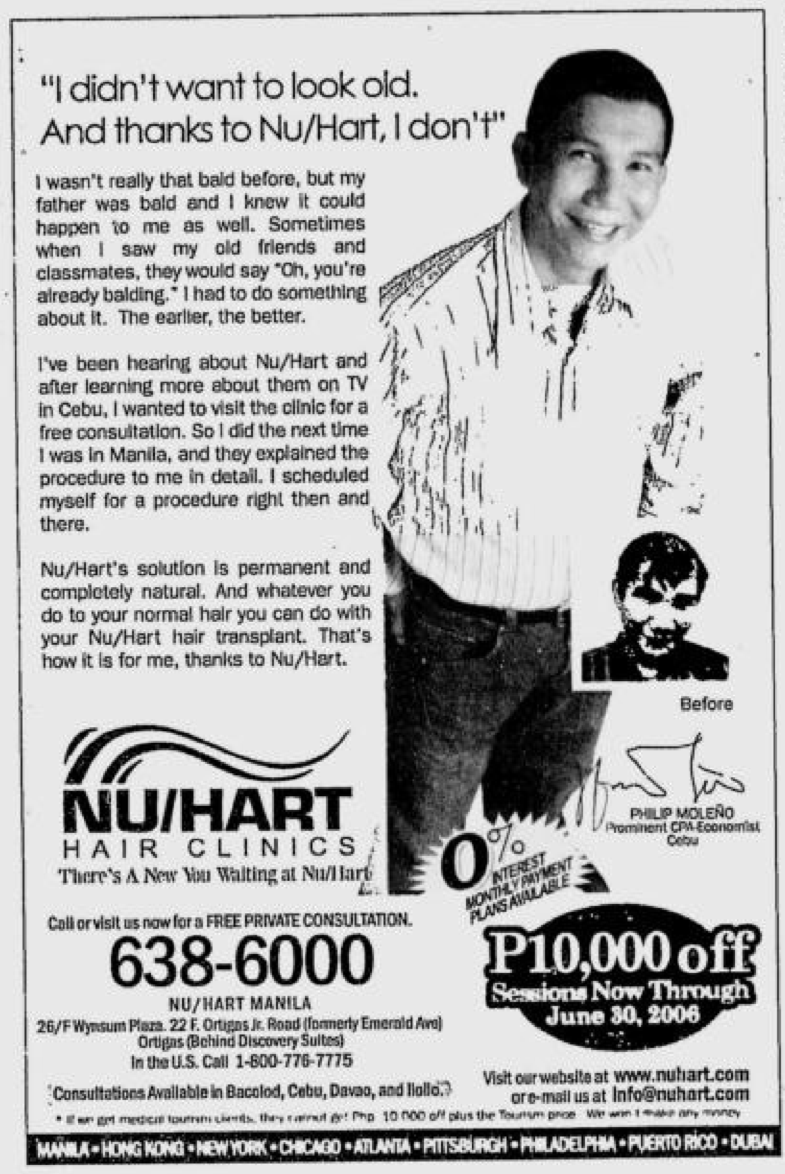
"There would just be one or two typhoons then but their chances of hitting the Philippines is higher because of the northeast monsoon," Cruz said.

He said this was an important fact for disaster relief agencies to know because it could mean that there might be more damage brought by the yearend storms.

Cruz said the cyclones that would pass through the Philippines in the last quarter of the year could possibly hit Luzon and the Visayas. He added that Mindanao is hardly hit by storms because of its location near the equator, where storms rarely form.

Cruz, meanwhile, said the El Niño and La Niña were not expected to make their presence felt in the Philippines until the end of the year.

"There is no El Niño and La Niña expected to prevail in the next three to six months," Cruz said. "There is no abnormality in the Pacific Ocean that could result in extreme climatic events."



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ZAMBOANGA CITY WATER DISTRICT
Pilar St., Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Zamboanga City Water District, through its Bids and Awards Committee II (BAC II), invites Security Agency to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project: Security Service for Water Treatment Plant, Watershed, Administration & Motorpool Section
Location: Lot 1: Water Treatment Plant, Lot 2: Watershed Area & Lot 3: Administration Bldg. & Motorpool Compound
Brief Description: Security Guarding Agency for Zamboanga City Water District
Purchase Requisition Nos. Lot PR No. 8941, Lot 2: PR No. 8994 & Lot 3: PR No. 8980
Approved Budget for the Contract: Lot 1: P 5,348,000.00, Lot 2: P 4,883,000.00 & Lot 3: P 1,872,000.00
Delivery Period: Contract Duration for a Period of Eleven (11) Months for Lot 1 & 2 While Lot 3 Contract Duration of One (1) Year

Prospective Bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project.

The list of minimum equipment requirement is indicated in the Eligibility Forms. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examinations of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post Qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	June 5 to 9, 2006
2. Prebid Conference	June 14, 2006
3. Opening of Bids	June 26, 2006
4. Bid Evaluation	June 26 to 30, 2006
5. Post-Qualification	July 3 to 7, 2006
6. Notice of Award	July 10, 2006

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the following amount for, Lot 1: P 4,300.00, Lot 2: P 3,900.00 & Lot 3 P 1,500.00, to the Zamboanga City Water District Cashier.

The Zamboanga City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) ALEJO S. ROJAS, JR.
BAC II CHAIRMAN

(PDI—June 7, 2006)

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A MEMBER of Greenpeace protests the commercial production of genetically engineered papayas that could lead to the collapse of the fruit's export market.

PDI PHOTO/JOAN BONDOC

RP could lose papaya market—Greenpeace

THE COUNTRY MAY LOSE ITS EXport market if it starts to develop and distribute genetically engineered (GE) papayas, according to an international environmental organization.

The Philippines could lose its Japanese market, which accounted for 81 percent of the country's papaya exports last year, if it would start to produce GE papayas instead of organic ones, Greenpeace-Southeast Asia warned.

In a study of Hawaii's experience with GE papayas completed last month, Greenpeace said the Philippines had gained the export market lost by Hawaii when Japan rejected the GE papayas.

The Philippines was the 14th top papaya producer in the world and the seventh top exporter in 2003, earning $1.84 million for exporting 1,467 metric tons in 2003.

"If GE papaya is commercialized in the country, our farmers will be faced with the immediate loss of our major export market which rejects genetically modified organisms (GMOs). Also, the uncontrollable threat of GE contamination on conventional papaya plants will be a serious problem that will hound farmers for years to come," Greenpeace GE campaigner Daniel Ocampo said in a press conference yesterday.

There is a pending application for the commercialization of the GE papaya, which is now being tested in Los Baños, Laguna.

"The GE papaya was a disaster in Hawaii and is unwanted in most parts of the world ... There is no sign in Europe that it is opening up to GMOs," Ocampo said.

"The Hawaiian experience with the GE papaya has been a total disaster. It is an experience we should not replicate if we want to protect our papaya market," he said.

Blanche S. Rivera

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NOTICE TO PRE-QUALIFY AND BID

The Solar Energy for Rural Electrification for Development (SERED) project is a collaboration between SunPower Corporation and Winrock International (WI) under the auspices of the USAID Global Development Alliance. The project is intended to strengthen solar energy market development in the Philippines and support the use of solar energy for rural electrification, including high value social applications such as school electrification to enable rural distance education. SERED builds on the success of the USAID-funded Alliance for Mindanao Off-Grid Renewable Energy (AMORE) program, implemented by WI from 2002-2005, as well as activities of the ongoing AMORE II program.

The objective of this procurement is to solicit responsive offers from qualified suppliers to submit proposals for the procurement of 256 units of 20Wp Solar Home Systems and 19 units of Sunny Lanterns.

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Unit 1509 Jollibee Plaza
Emerald Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City 1600
Tel. No. +63 (2) 687-9091 to 92
Fax. No. +63 (2) 631-8215

For a copy of the Request for Proposal kits, please contact Mr. Arthur S. Barrameda, AMORE Procurement Officer, at tel. no 634-1774 or 687-9092 loc 120 or email: abarrameda@amore.org.ph. Copies of the RfP will be available between June 8 and 14, 2006. A pre-bid conference shall be held at the above address on June 16, 2006 at the AMORE Conference Room to entertain questions concerning the RfP and provide additional details.

Deadline for submission of proposals is June 23, 2006, 5:00 pm. Late proposals will not be accepted. Please refer to the RfP for specific instructions on proposal submission.

Winrock International (WI) reserves the right to reject any or all Applications for Pre-qualification, waive any required formality therein, and accept the bid and award the subcontract to the most advantageous offer to the project. WI assumes no responsibility to compensate or indemnify the bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred for the preparation of the bids, nor does it guarantee an award will be made.

(PDI-JUNE 7, 2006)

3 BIR agents axed

OMBUDSMAN MERceditas Gutierrez has dismissed three Bureau of Internal Revenue officers for failure to remit more than P540,000 in tax collections.

Dismissed for dishonesty and grave misconduct were Cebu City Revenue Officer II Dina Neri, Antique Revenue Collection Officer Myrbeth Bella Fornela and Malaybalay City Revenue Collection Officer Joel Hernan Cortez.

Gutierrez said Neri failed to remit the P220,000 in estate taxes paid by the estate of the late Wilfredo Faustino Jr.

Fornela, on the other hand, Gutierrez said, falsified some of her collection reports for the months of April 2000; April, June and July 2001 and June 2003, resulting in a loss of P304,701.58 in collections for those months.

Nelson F. Flores

Antigov't rally set on Migrants Day

By Jerome Aning

OVERSEAS FILIPINO workers currently in the country, families of those abroad and their supporters will mark Migrants Day today with a rally at Mendiola Bridge near Malacañang to denounce what they claimed was the government's neglect of the OFWs' welfare and plunder of OFW funds.

The militant OFW group Migrante International said the protest would also highlight the plight of thousands of OFWs languishing in foreign jails, were stranded or were victims of human rights violations in their host countries.

"The government has been treating OFWs as mere exports and dollar-earners. No serious effort has been made to attend to their needs swiftly and capably," said Migrante chair Connie Bragas-Regalado in an interview.

Regalado said the forced migration of Filipinos to look for work and the estrangement of their families were reasons Migrant Day should not be celebrated.

"The government is not sincerely addressing the worsening crisis of the already backward Philippine economy," she said. "It has not seriously undertaken the steps to genuine national industrialization but pursued its labor export policy to collect enough dollars to finance the bankrupt regime."

Regalado claimed the government's main objective for so long had been how to spend or misspend the money generated by the OFW recruitment and deployment industry and the insurance contributions and remittances made by OFWs.

This, she said, was very evident in the apparent plunder of the P8-billion OFW fund entrusted to the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA).

She recalled that President Macapagal-Arroyo had ordered the release of $293,500 and another P5 million from the fund to finance Philippine support for the US war in Iraq. Also, P6 billion of the fund was transferred to the Land Bank and Development Bank of the Philippines for "liability-free management."

She said the President also directed the transfer of the P538 million OWWA medicare fund to PhilHealth just before the campaign for the 2004 national elections took place.

Regalado called the establishment of an OFW Bank "a classic example of being fried in one's own fat as the OFWs' deposits in Land Bank and DBP were seen to be tapped as seed money for the bank meant to capture OFWs remittances up to the last dollar."

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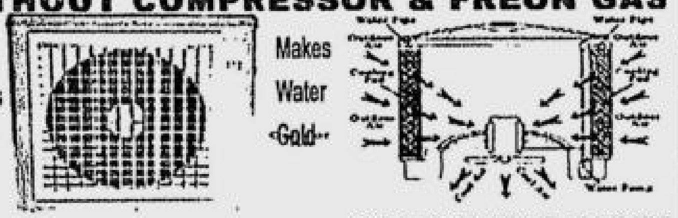
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A. DIPLOMA PROGRAM IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
• PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT
June 17, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM
• INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
June 24, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
• MARKETING AND SALES MANAGEMENT
July 1, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
B. DIPLOMA PROGRAM IN MARKETING MANAGEMENT
• ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION
June 17, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM -5:00 PM
• BRAND MANAGEMENT
June 24, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
• CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN MARKETING
July 1, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
• MARKETING RESEARCH
July 8, 2006 Saturday 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
C. REGULAR PROGRAMS & LEARNING SESSIONS
• PLANNING, DIRECTING AND CONTROLLING SKILLS FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS
June 17, 2006 Saturday 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
• OFFICE MANAGEMENT FOR SECRETARIES AND PERSONNEL ASSISTANTS
June 19 - 30, 2006 M-W-F 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
• ADVANCED SUPERVISORY TECHNIQUES
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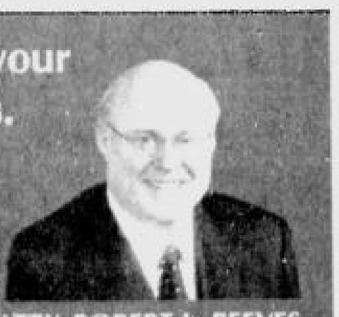
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Gov't agents seize ivory tusks from religious store

By Blanche S. Rivera

CUSTOMS AND ENVIRONMENT AGENTS RAIDED a store selling religious images in Sta. Cruz, Manila, yesterday following a tip about a lost shipment of 6,000 kilograms of ivory tusks, worth at least P30 million, that had been confiscated at the South Harbor last November.

The National Anti-Environment Crime Task Force (NAECTF) confiscated 94 different images made of ivory, 35 pieces of elephant tusks and 81 kgs of scrap from used tusks at the Our Lady of Manaoag religious shop.

Members of the task force also went to the house of the shop's owner in Parañaque last night and discovered that more ivory tusks had been loaded in the owner's Honda CRV.

The NAECTF agents were still waiting for the owner to arrive at his home at press time. Police said they would tow the vehicle if the owner refused to cooperate.

Tusks intact

The BOC reported the loss of the tusks only yesterday during a meeting with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which is the agency authorized to take custody of the seized tusks.

The BOC claimed the tusks were lost while in the custody of Asian Terminals Inc., where the 40-ft container van containing the shipment of tusks and mineral stones was being kept since November 2005.

During the meeting, it was also learned that customs agents at the Naia had confiscated another illegal shipment of ivory tusks in October 2005 but this remained intact in the BOC's custody.

DENR property

Environment Undersecretary Roy Kyamko said the BOC had rejected the DENR's many requests for the confiscated tusks to be turned over to its Protected Areas and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB).

As the country's representative to the Convention on International Trade for Endangered Species (CITES), the PAWB is supposed to take custody of items produced from endangered animals.

"We don't know why they refused to give it to us. They have their own reasons... The tusks are supposed to be DENR property. It was the DENR that provided the information that led to the confiscation of the tusks," Kyamko said in a phone interview.

Trans-shipment route

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, who heads the NAECTF, is helping a visiting team from the Lusaka Task Force, an international group that is investigating how the contraband goods found their way to the Philippines.

The Lusaka Task Force, which will be in the country for a week, is looking into reports that the Philippines may have become the new trans-shipment route for illegal traders of ivory tusks after arrests were made in Hong Kong and Vietnam.

African elephant tusks are much in demand in the world market, fetching a minimum of $50 per kg. A tusk of good quality can fetch a price of as high as $100 per kg, the DENR said.

Cora Davis, the Metro Manila director of the DENR, said the BOC has been surveying religious stores selling ivory images since last month when the bureau discovered that the tusks had disappeared from the ATI container.

Missing

It was not clear, however, how the BOC was able to confirm that the tusks found at the Our Lady of Manaoag shop were from the shipment that was seized at South Harbor in November and which had gone missing.

Reyes has ordered the creation of another task force to investigate how the ivory tusks disappeared from the BOC's custody at South Harbor.

CUSTOMS and DENR agents seize religious images made of ivory from the Our Lady of Manaoag store in Sta. Cruz, Manila.

EDWIN BACASMAS

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, June 7, 2006
9th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading:	2 Tim 1:1-3, 6-12
Gospel:	Mark 12:18-27

The Sadducees came to Jesus. Since they claim that there is no resurrection, they questioned him in this way, "Master, in the Scriptures Moses gave us this law: 'If anyone dies and leaves a wife but no children, his brother must take the wife and give her a child who will be considered the child of his deceased brother.' Now, there were seven brothers. The first married a wife, but he died without leaving any children. The second took the wife and he, too, died leaving no children. The same thing happened to the third. Finally the seven died leaving no children. Last of all the woman died. Now, in the resurrection, to which of them will she be wife? For the seven had her as wife."

Jesus replied, "You could be wrong in this regard because you understand neither the Scriptures nor the power of God. When they rise from the dead, men and women do not marry but are like the angels in heaven.

Now, about the resurrection of the dead, have you never reflected on the chapter of the burning bush in the book of Moses? God said to him: I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. Now, he is the God, not of the dead but of the living. You are totally wrong."

Commentary

Paul exhorts Timothy to be bold and let loose the Spirit that he has been given, to express it in wisdom and testimony that is strong and loving, and to be holy. We have been entrusted with the grace of the crucified and risen Jesus and we are to live in that light and power.

Jesus battles the Sadducees. They mock him about eternal life, but he boldly tells them they know nothing, for life in God is nothing like life here on earth. God is the God of life, and that is meant to be ever more abundant life here and now. Hereafter follows upon our lives lived in God now.

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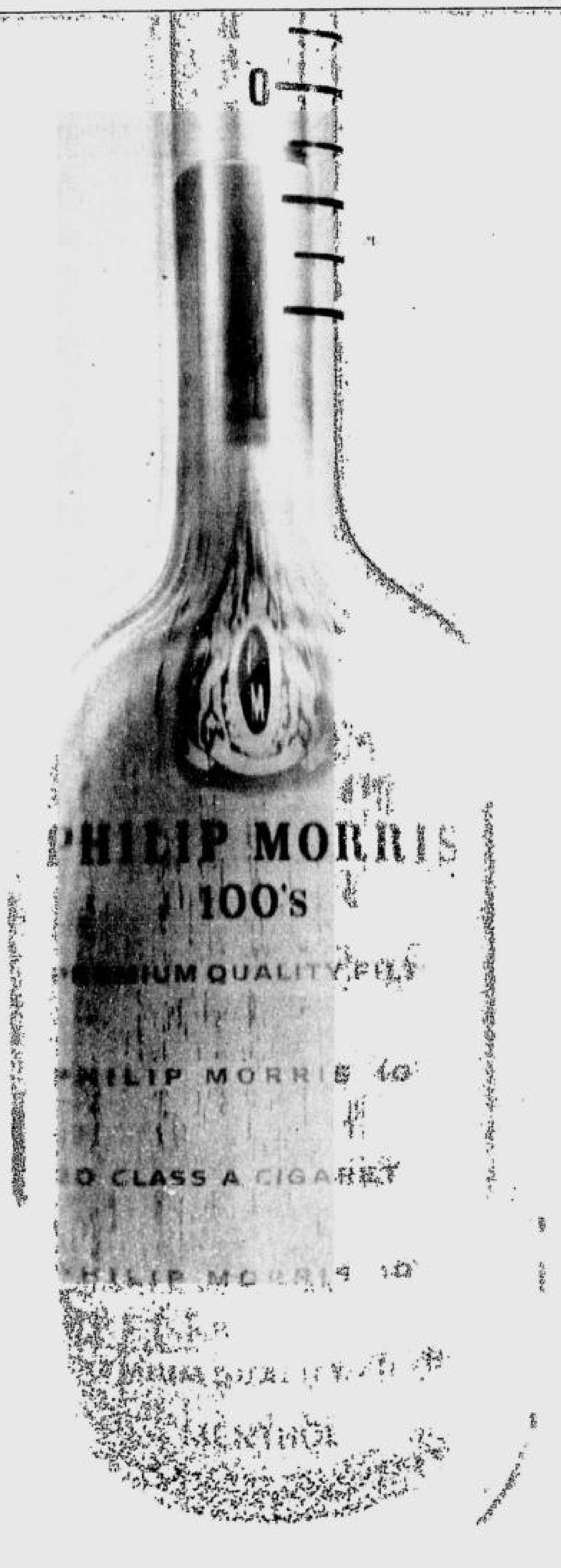

Government Warnin
is dangerous

Reds seek resumption of talks on rights violations

By Norman Bordadora

THE COMMUNIST-LED NATIONAL Democratic Front yesterday pressed the government to resume talks on nearly 800 cases of alleged human rights violations by both sides despite the breakdown of peace negotiations.

Out of the total of 799 complaints of alleged violations received by a joint government-NDF panel, 693 involved abuses by government security forces while 106 were blamed on NDF armed groups, a panel member said.

The NDF call for discussions on the cases coincided with a resurgence of killings of political activists around the country, which leftist groups blamed on government and paramilitary groups.

The complaints filed against government forces include 163 cases of killings involving 265 victims, according to a list provided by the NDF. They include people killed in alleged summary executions and 102 killed in alleged massacres.

Oversight body

The cases also include "forced disappearances" of 45 people.

Details of 106 complaints against communist armed groups were not immediately available.

Peace talks broke down about two years ago after the government accused the rebels of continued attacks and the NDF protested against the inclusion of the rebels in the so-called foreign terrorist list of the United States and the European Union.

The 799 cases are pending before the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) created by government and NDF peace negotiators in 2004 to oversee the implementation of their previous agreement on respect for human rights.

Dependent on peace talks

The JMC is funded by the Dutch government, which is brokering the peace talks.

"The (govenrment) panel is trying to equate the convening of the JMC with the resumption of the peace talks. They are saying that there will be no JMC meeting unless the peace talks resume," said Marissa Dumanjug-Palo, head of the NDF section of the JMC's joint secretariat.

"That should not be the case because the human rights agenda has already been agreed upon by the two parties," Palo said in a media briefing at the JMC offices.

To make matters worse, some members of NDF group are being harassed by government forces, Palo said.

Palo said she herself had been tailed by motorcycle-riding men on her way to the JMC offices in Quezon City.

"The two motorcycles followed us the entire stretch of E. Rodriguez, maintaining a distance of one or two vehicles even if there was no vehicle between us," Palo said, recalling an incident she said happened on May 31. "(They) did not attempt to overtake us and always rode diagonal from each other."

Importance of JMC

She described one of the motorcycles as a "motorbike, the kind used by SWAT policemen", and said the other was much bigger.

NDF legal consultant Edre Olalia said the JMC was a useful venue for the two parties to discuss the complaints together and determine whether there were indeed human rights violations and that inaction on the 799 was not a reason to dissolve the JMC.

Military response

Composed of government and NDF representatives, the JMC is tasked to monitor implementation of the human rights agreement between the two sides. The joint secretariat, or JS, is its administrative and technical staff. The JMC and the JS are composed of Under their bilateral agreement, the JMC is supposed to meet at least every three months.

"However, since its last meeting on 15 April 2004, the JMC has not met again," JMC co-chair for the NDF, Fidel Agcaoili, said in a statement.

"The (government) has refused any JMC meetings until the resumption of formal talks which the (government) itself has suspended," Agcaoile said, stressing that the implementation of the two sides' agreement on human rights was not dependent on the formal peace negotiations.

As a result, the JMC has not conducted any joint investigation of the complaints, he said.

The military threw back at the rebels their allegations that soldiers and paramilitary groups were behind the killings of militants, saying a "special operation team" of the New People's Army rebels was behind the murders based on what it said were subversive documents. *With reports Delfin T. Mallari, Southern Luzon Bureau, and PDI Research*

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CA committee backs Esperon promotion

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

THE DEFENSE COMMITTEE OF THE COMMISSION on Appointments yesterday endorsed the confirmation of Maj. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.'s promotion to lieutenant general despite the vigorous objection of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

Biazon had asked the committee to defer action on the promotion of Esperon, commander of the Philippine Army, until after the Armed Forces or Malacañang has submitted a military fact-finding committee's report on allegations that Esperon and other generals were involved in the rigging of the 2004 elections to ensure President Macapagal-Arroyo's victory.

But Rep. Jurdin Jesus Romualdo, chair of the CA defense committee, overruled Biazon's motion and the rest of the committee decided to endorse Esperon's confirmation to the CA caucus and plenary session today. Biazon would be allowed to raise his objection anew today, Romualdo said.

Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr., committee vice chair, said Esperon will most likely be confirmed today because it will be the last plenary session of the CA before Congress adjourns on Friday.

"There is a good possibility he will be confirmed tomorrow. After all he's not responsible (for the Mayuga report)," Pichay said.

Biazon maintained that Esperon should not be promoted to the next rank until the Mayuga report is submitted to the commission.

He said the CA should examine the Mayuga report because it determines whether appointees are fit for their positions. He said the allegations about the involvement of Esperon in the alleged election cheating in Mindanao were serious.

"I have not made a conclusion as to the guilt or innocence of this general; what I need is a resolution of the issue," Biazon said.

He said if the President really wants Esperon's promotion, she should release the Mayuga report to the commission.

Esperon said he would not answer questions about the Mayuga report or about the election fraud when Biazon and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, who also opposes the promotion, question him in today's CA session.

"I am submitting myself to the wisdom of the members of the commission," Esperon said.

Esperon and the other general's involvement in the alleged election fraud surfaced in the "Hello Garci" tapes. A military committee headed by Navy chief Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga investigated the allegations and subsequently cleared the generals, but its report was never released in full.

Land mine kills 2 Marines in South

TWO MARINES WERE KILLED YESTERDAY when one of them stepped on an improvised land mine while they were on patrol in Tawi-Tawi, a military spokesperson said.

Two clans fighting over land and the Abu Sayyaf terror group were among those suspected of planting the mine.

The Marines, a first lieutenant and a private who were not identified, were from the 11th Marine Battalion based in Tawi-Tawi. They were patrolling in Barangay Daldatal outside Sapa-Sapa town when one of them stepped on an improvised explosive device, Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan said.

"The officer involved was trying to settle the differences between the two parties but, unfortunately, on the way they had an accident," said Caculitan, adding that no other details were immediately available.

A day earlier, Marines recovered an unexploded improvised land mine.

Caculitan said one of the two clans could have planted the mines to try to keep the other away from the disputed piece of land.

Caculitan said no shots were fired at the Marines after the blast, which usually followed a rebel ambush.

The Muslim extremist Abu Sayyaf group and bandits also operate in area.

"We still don't know who was behind the blast but the Abu Sayyaf is among the threat groups in the area," Caculitan said. *AP; AFP*

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Rescue

EDITORIAL

YESTERDAY THE NATION NEWSPAPER OF THAIland published an editorial on educational reform. It said that what should be a great national priority is foundering; the ongoing political crisis in that country means that the "master plan to modernize the education system has not only ground to a halt but may even shift into reverse." Thailand's educational system, according to the editorial, is "inefficient and badly run," and "bogged down by bargaining between hesitant politicians and teachers fighting to maintain the status quo."

Thai policy was meant to decentralize the educational system; bureaucracies have been subdivided but don't necessarily talk to each other. Worst of all, the Thai newspaper says, "teachers tend to stick to the old corruption-prone patronage system instead of a meritocracy, and often have an outdated mindset that discourages adoption of innovative teaching methods." As in the Philippines, the paper says that the "only big improvement has been the substantial salary increase for teachers. But the government failed to use the pay adjustment to motivate them to be more innovative in their teaching techniques and adopt the new student-centered learning style."

We put forward the Thai view not only because it echoes Philippine concerns but because it indicates that education is a regional concern and, indeed, crisis.

Educators in Bicol, for example, a model in many ways for the possibilities and realistic achievements local initiatives and empowerment can accomplish, have put forward many interesting and innovative proposals for educational reform. The first of their proposals is to do away with the administrative layers that eat up funds before they can tangibly affect students. This can be done by having provinces and cities directly disburse income allocated for education. Local governments can raise salaries and the qualifications required to retain a teaching position. Local responsibility for the quality of education also makes education a local elections issue.

This means, too, flexibility to adopt methods that make more rational use of the existing educational infrastructure. One of our reports last Monday pointed to the concept of vouchers, in which the state subsidizes the education of students who can't be accommodated in the public schools but can't afford private education. Former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz, in his commentary, explained the efforts of GATSPE, which can educate a class of 50 students in private schools through subsidies amounting to P200,000 as compared to the P625,000 it would cost the public school system to build, furnish and staff a new classroom.

Indeed, at a budget allocation of P4,000 per student in the GATSPE program, savings of P400 per student can be realized, the measly annual expenditure for the Filipino child being P4,600. This indicates an inferior education as it is, as our report last Monday showed. For that amount, a 20 percent passing average for the Upcat entrance exam is achieved. But raise the amount to P17,900, the amount currently spent in science high schools, and competitiveness is doubled, to a passing rate of 40 percent. Spend P68,000 per student, as the Philippine Science High School does, and the passing rate becomes a world-class 90 percent. Some educators in Naga City calculate that greater local control on education spending would allow P6,667 to be actually spent on students there—a significant increase by any measure.

But education reform—or rescue, as it should be properly called in our country's case—requires many things. Increased private and public sector partnerships, for one. Stripping away bureaucratic layers and finding a mechanism to make the bureaucracy answerable to the people, for another. Discarding outdated fetishes such as insisting on building classrooms while disregarding the shortage of teachers or the need to train better ones, even as private schools operate far below peak capacity. The national goal must be not to go through the motions of educating children, but rather finding every way, specially new ways, to ensure every child is educated better, and with better value.

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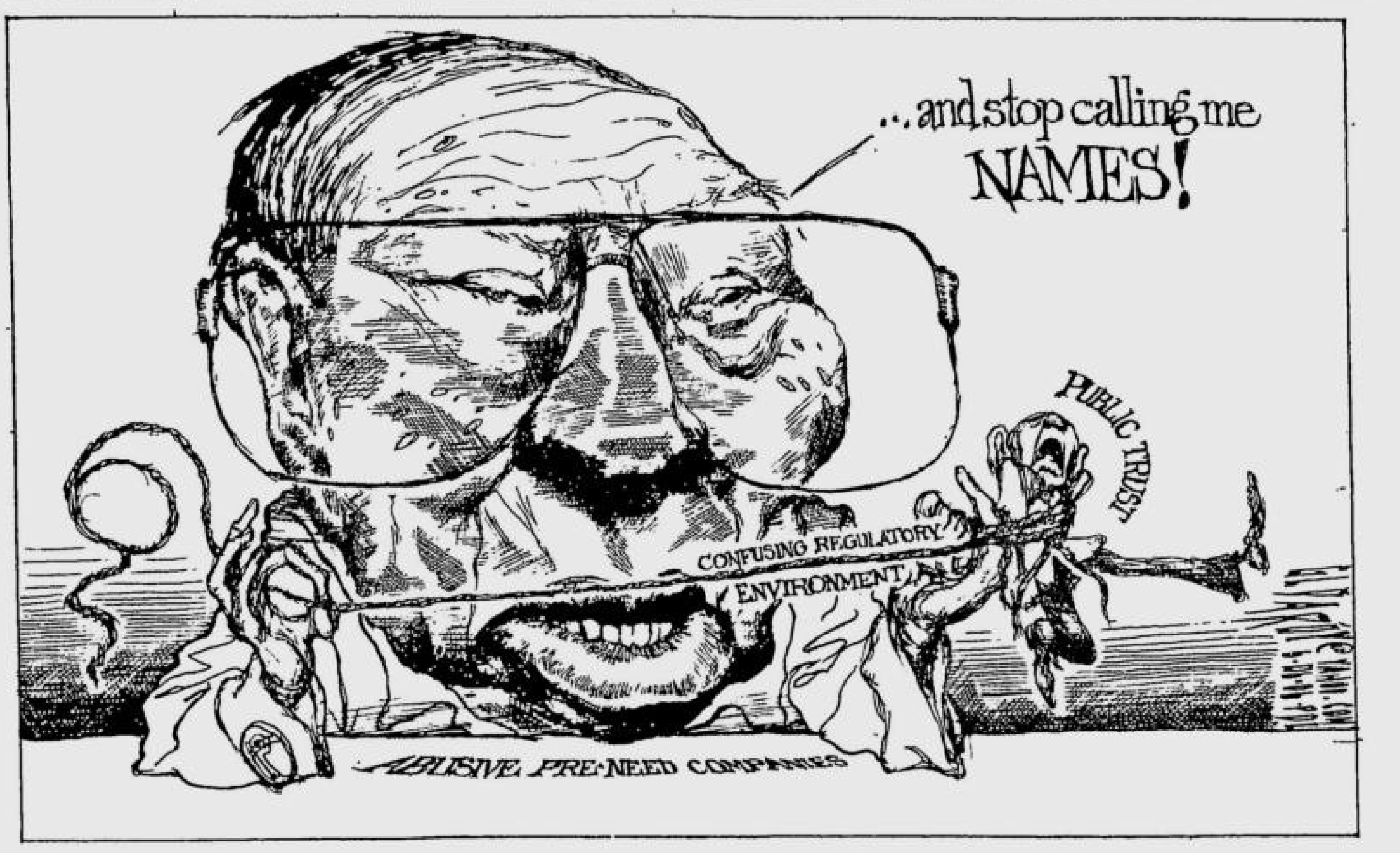
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Why the bureaucratic runaround on water?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT. THIS CHARADE has been going on for 13 years now. I am reminded of it again because of the lack of water in many areas in Metro Manila and environs. Plus the current controversy over a proposed housing project, being pushed by shadowy characters under mysterious circumstances inside the La Mesa watershed, that will pollute the water in the reservoir.

Here are the facts:

- La Mesa Dam is the principal source of water for 12 million residents of the metropolis. Aside from the water generated by its own watershed, additional water is piped in from Angat and Ipo dams in Bulacan. In addition, many subdivisions, factories, commercial establishments, as well as individual homes, source their water from deep wells. So much fresh water is being sucked out that the underground aquifers are running dry and salt water is taking its place in the aquifers. Result: Water being pumped out of the wells is salty.
- Because of this, the National Water Resources Board has prohibited the use of deep wells and the drilling of more. "If water continues to be sucked out," said NWRB Executive Director Ramon Alikpala, "the ground above the aquifers will subside, making them more susceptible to floods." But he quickly added that he could stop residents and establishments in three cities (Las Piñas, Parañaque and Muntinlupa) from using deep wells "because of a lack of an alternative water source in these areas." He proposed that deep wells be banned in the rest of Metro Manila.
- While many areas are engulfed by gigantic floods after the slightest thunderstorm, drinking water is scarce. We see evidence of that daily on TV as residents in poorer areas line up for water with all sorts of containers.
- Every summer, there is a shortage of water—not only for drinking and washing but also for agriculture. When a major pipeline from Angat is blocked or damaged, much of Metro Manila goes thirsty for days while the damage is repaired.
- While the two water concessionaires are busy laying down new pipes, little or no water comes out of these pipes. There just isn't enough water to supply the needs of the population.

The government is dreaming of harnessing the Laiban Dam near Quezon, but that is decades away. The government keeps talking about pumping up water from Laguna and Taal lakes, but those are also still dreams.

- Yet there is a ready source of fresh water in a reservoir nearby. All you have to do is connect a new pipe from the reservoir to the La Mesa reservoir a few kilometers downstream and you have millions of gallons of additional water daily. Every day millions of gallons of water just flow over the dam to the Marikina and Pasig rivers, and out to sea.

This is the mystery that I don't understand. We have a perennial shortage of water, there is a ready source of water to relieve the shortage, but the government agencies in charge of water do not want to tap it. This is the Wawa Dam in Montalban (now renamed Rodriguez) which used to be the main source of water of Manila.

Here's an even deeper mystery: A Filipino company that has helped put up a big dam in the Cordilleras is offering to tap Wawa Dam—for free! There is no legal obstacle to the proposal, but the NWRB is using the longest red tape in the world to delay the project. This has been going on for the last 13 years. Why?

Another mystery: Recently, Manila Water proudly announced that it would supply water to Antipolo and neighboring towns. Where will the water come from? From La Mesa! Water from La Mesa would be pumped up, at considerable expense, to Antipolo, etc.

"Why not from Wawa Dam?" I asked. "It's already there."

No answer. Ponder this: Water will be pumped from La Mesa, which is already short of water supply, to several communities that already has a reservoir full of water that flows uselessly out to sea every day. Where is the logic there?

It appears that I am not the only one perplexed by the mysteries. I received a letter from the proponent of tapping the Wawa Dam, Oscar Violago, owner of the San Lorenzo Ruiz Builders & Developers Group, who has also read the NWRB statements. He is wondering why the NWRB has given it the runaround. I have posed the same question to Alikpala a couple of times, and I couldn't get a satisfactory answer.

"It is unfortunate that the NWRB, after all these years, is now admitting that it has not done anything to ensure that the water supply of Metro Manila would be sufficient and that it now says it has no alternative water source in sight," Violago said in his letter. "This leads us to ask again why, after 13 years of bureaucratic runaround (we applied for our water permit in 1993), the NWRB has yet to approve our company's water permit to extract, supply and deliver the water from Wawa Dam to Metro Manila. We are willing and able to supply upwards of 1.5 million cubic meters of potable water per day, which is more than enough to solve once and for all the perennial water crisis."

"...We cannot understand NWRB's frame of mind," Violago continued. "We have repeatedly stated that our project would be at no cost to the government and that all risks would be to our account... We wonder how many more years Metro Manila will have to endure this lack of water when by a single stroke of the pen, Director Alikpala and the NWRB can make the water shortage a thing of the past."

Poetic justice

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

RAUL GONZALEZ IS PISSED OFF AT TIME magazine reporter Nelly Sindayen. He has an interpretation for why she refuses to appear before him to reveal the names of those who attended a meeting in Jose Cojuangco's place last Feb. 24: "I think she's sympathetic to the other side."

I am tempted to say that I can understand why Gonzalez does not understand the first thing about journalism since he is not a journalist. But he doesn't understand the first thing about justice either, and he is supposed to be the justice secretary. His lack of understanding about things has nothing to do with professions, it's congenital.

It's a cardinal principle in a democracy that a journalist may not be compelled to reveal his sources or testify against people. He may do so if he wishes, but he may not be compelled to do it. The exercise of his profession demands that he keep certain things secret. He betrays confidentiality, his sources will dry up and he will no longer be able to pursue his story. It is to protect the public's right to know that democracy protects the journalist's right to not divulge certain things.

It has little to do with being sympathetic to one side or the other, although journalists, for all their efforts at objectivity, can't always help but feel sympathetic toward certain things. Particularly when the issues are starkly etched in black and white, in good and evil. The great Ed Murrow did not stop being objective while waging a crusade against the truly evil Joseph McCarthy and was clearly sympathetic to the cause of liberty against an order built on terror and paranoia. I don't know if Nelly feels the same way, but I know I do. If journalists feel sympathetic to a side these days, it is not their fault. It is the fault of a regime that has made itself utterly unsympathetic.

But far more than that, what in hell is Gonzalez complaining about? There is no law in a democracy that compels journalists to reveal their sources or inform the world about the background of their stories. But there is a law that compels public officials, never mind ordinary citizens, to reveal what they know about wrongdoing. There is a law that says public officials must appear before Congress when they are summoned to shed light on the truth, which is the foundation of law and justice. There is a law—in a democracy, anyway—that says government must be transparent at all times, its existence resting on the sufferance of the people. You may—no, you must—force them under pain of being fired or doing time to tell what they know about wrongdoing. That is a law that exists not just in the statute books but in human hearts.

Yet you do not find Gonzalez demanding that that law be obeyed. You find him demanding that that law be screwed. His boss, GMA herself, has done what no other president before her, including Ferdinand Marcos, has ever done, which is to prevent under pain of prosecution, court martial, or jail, or all of the above, any government official from appearing before the Senate without her permission to talk about wrongdoing under her. Or more to the point, by her.

The Supreme Court has already scrapped that atrocity—heaven forbid we call it a law— saying it has as much place in democracy as pornographic pictures in church. The Supreme Court has already rescinded that madness— heaven forbid we attribute any sanity to it— saying it belongs only to a country that has barbed wires strung around it. Yet government officials still refuse to appear before Senate hearings. Eduardo Ermita says the order is still in force since it has been appealed before the courts, as though the concept of government officials being gagged can possibly have any merit by the ways of heaven and earth.

You do not find Gonzalez irascibly demanding that Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani and Col. Alexander Balutan be allowed—no, compelled—to appear before the Senate and tell the world what they know, and that if GMA is preventing them from doing so it can only be because she is sympathetic to the other side, which is herself. You do not find Gonzalez thundering forth with a scowl that Gudani and Balutan were by their own admission at the scene of the crime and therefore in an absolute position to name the criminals. We find him instead remembering only that there is a pathetic attempt by his boss to cling to an order she issued capriciously, which the Supreme Court has already junked along with the day's garbage, because like her very existence it still hangs by the thread of a tenuous appeal.

Is there any reason why Nelly Sindayen should be forced to appear before Gonzalez? No. At the very least she has a journalistic right not to cough up her sources, and at the very most she has a human right not to throw up before such a sight. Is there any reason why Gudani and Balutan should be allowed to appear before the Senate? Yes. At the very least every citizen, not to speak of government official, has the duty to report what is wrong, and at the very most what they have to report is a matter of life and death for the nation.

Is there any compelling need for Nelly Sindayen to shed light on the plot to oust GMA? No. At the very least the leaders of the plot are well known to government and have for co-conspirators 65 percent of the population, and at the very most a certified plotter has no business complaining about presumed plots to overthrow a president. Is there a compelling need for Gudani and Balutan to shed light on who won the vote in Muslim Mindanao? Go figure.

Sindayen refuses to do as Gonzalez bids? Well, we may not get justice in this country under this justice secretary and his boss, but now and then we can still get some very poetic one.

One year after 'Garci'

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

A YEAR AFTER SURVIVING THE POLITICAL CRISIS generated by the disclosure of the infamous Garcillano tapes, the Arroyo administration is marking the event as a watershed.

Making an assessment of the performance of the Arroyo presidency two years after her election in 2004, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye had to gall to suggest at the Newsmakers Forum that President Macapagal-Arroyo had weathered the crisis unscathed, and that it's now time to put the turbulence of 2005-2006 behind. "I think today is better than yesterday and tomorrow will even be better," he said.

Bunye did not offer any basis for the claim more solid than the mere fact that the administration has survived. In highlighting political survival as the main accomplishment of the administration during the first two years of its second term, he has provoked the issue to be raised of how big a price the nation had to pay for this. More important than the survival of the administration in the past two years, it may be asked whether the country will survive another four years of the Arroyo presidency.

The turmoil of the past 12 months has left the President deeply wounded, and the administration severely damaged and limping. It is astonishing how on the basis of just muddling through, the President can declare with absolute confidence that she would "stay on as President until 2010 and not one day later."

The President has survived by digging deep into the reserve powers of the presidency to defend Fortress Malacañang from a year of sustained siege by her political foes. The field of combat is littered with many casualties. National emergency was declared in February, leaving in its wake damaged institutions that guarantee political liberties. The emergency and the battle for survival have reopened old cleavages between the Left and the military Right and have polarized the nation again along this ideological and social divide.

Administration defenders base their rosy outlook for the remaining four years on the claim that the President had faced down the mass resignation of key Cabinet members last July, quashed an impeachment complaint in the House, wore down a campaign of street protests demanding her ouster, and aborted a coup attempt. They cite economic data showing the economy grew 5.5 percent in the first quarter, higher than the 4.2 percent growth of last year, the rise of the peso exchange rate, the rally of the stock market, and the value-added tax reform. They claim that the administration now sits on more solid footing than a year ago and "is prepared to make tough, maybe unpopular decisions, to see to it that economic programs are really implemented."

The thrust of this statement is that the economy can take off despite political uncertainty and instability, but the other aspect of this is that stability can be ensured by political repression and the curtailment of political liberties. But this presentation ignores the costs of political stability that is not founded on political consensus but secured by repressive measures. Already we are reaping a heavy price from this policy of repression and of regime survival built on the strategy of fanning social conflict, with the mounting death toll of people branded as enemies of the regime.

The regime's presentation of the political outlook suggests that its survival has been purchased at the price of blood and continuing political strife. From a more sinister political aspect, the regime is offering a formula for economic takeoff, that is, economic benefits in exchange for political repression and a guaranteed tenure until 2010.

The turmoil of the past 12 months has revealed the glaring institutional weaknesses of Philippine democracy. It exposed the consolidation of political powers by the President during the past five years, allowing her to acquire a majority in the House and to build a strong party coalition through Lakas—resources crucial to killing an impeachment complaint—and to mobilize rural and local government support to counter urban-based attempts to unseat her.

The turmoil unmasked the weakness of the institutional opposition, highlighted by the Lakas majority in the House, and the fragmented distribution of seats to parties in the Senate, where members act as individuals, or small blocs, more than as party members.

This has resulted in developments favorable to the President and the division of Congress on key initiatives designed to keep her in power and serve out her term. The President has taken advantage of the truncation of Congress to push her campaign for constitutional change leading to a shift from the presidential to the parliamentary system. The House of Representatives and the Senate are divided over the mode of constitutional change: whether to do it through a constituent assembly or through a constitutional convention. The House wants a constituent assembly, while the Senate wants a convention. This division foreshadows a period of legislative stalemate.

This balance of forces is the basis for the President's belief that she will stay in power until 2010, not her ability to deliver economic results. The failure of her opponents to mobilize mass protests to oust her through another people power uprising makes the regime believe it can run roughshod over resistance to her continued stay in power.

The President's strategy for hanging on to power promises intensification of conflict and turmoil in the next four years. A few flash points stand in the way, including the Cha-cha issue and political repression.

Traveling with children

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

IN RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF CHILD TRAFficking and kidnapping, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) decades ago required minors who were traveling abroad unaccompanied by any adult, or by an adult who was neither a parent nor a guardian, to present a travel clearance before being allowed to leave the country.

This was because Filipino children at that time were either being smuggled out of the country for sex trafficking or other exploitative purposes, or spirited out by one parent or a guardian as a way of skirting disputes over custody. While the clearances have proven effective in curbing child trafficking and kidnapping, parents have also complained about the extra work needed to secure clearances even when they were traveling with their own children. I remember, while my children were still minors, making sure I always brought with me a copy of my children's birth certificates and our marriage contract, as well as a letter of authorization from my husband, whenever I needed to travel abroad with one or both my children. It was an annoyance, true, but still better than risking trauma and major inconvenience at the airport.

Now, "based on the actual experiences of the field implementers and other stakeholders," Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral has issued amendments to the guidelines for minors traveling abroad. It may come a little late, as the season for vacations abroad has ended with the opening of school here, but it should prove useful in the future.

The DSWD says the amended guidelines "simplify and shorten application (for) and issuance of travel clearance."

"The travel clearance can be used for multiple travels within the one-year validity period, provided that conditions under which the travel clearance was issued have not changed. If a change in conditions occur, like change of traveling companion, a new travel clearance must be secured," says the DSWD. "A child traveling with either parent or with his or her solo parent or legal guardian does not need a travel clearance or the Parental Travel Permit, which was previously required for a minor traveling with only one parent."

* * *

WHO needs a travel clearance? Any minor (below 18 years old) traveling alone to a foreign country except children whose parents are in the foreign service, are living abroad or are immigrants (provided they have the necessary documentation), and any minor traveling abroad accompanied by a person other than his/her parents.

No clearance is needed when a child is traveling with both or either parents or with his/her solo parents or legal guardian, again, provided the needed documentation is made available (such as the death certificate of one parent, or certification that no marriage took place in the case of a single parent).

Applications for travel clearance together with the supporting documents required should be submitted or filed by the parent or legal guardian or a duly authorized representative at any DSWD Field or regional office. Application forms may be obtained from any DSWD field office or travel clearance office. They may also be downloaded from the DSWD website www.dswd.gov.ph. More information on applying for and getting a Travel Permit may also be obtained from the same website.

* * *

FOUR Filipinas—Jennifer Dugena, US-based Eliza Escano, Estrella Santos and Vivian Limpin, who contributed her poem "Soltera," published in the Sunday Inquirer Magazine a few years back—are included in a unique anthology of women's works entitled "Imagining Ourselves."

The book is the result of a brainstorm of Paula Goldman, a PhD candidate at Harvard, who asked herself the question: "What defines today's generation of women?"

"Curious about how the experiences of this new generation of adult women differed from those who had come before," Goldman, says a press release, "thought a book could showcase the power and talent of this group to a wider audience." Joining forces with the International Museum of Women in San Francisco, Goldman sent out a call for submissions, asking women to submit artwork and writing on the topic.

Thousands of responses later, and after months of sifting through the submitted material, Goldman came up with "Imagining Ourselves: Global Voices from a New Generation of Women," which was launched worldwide last March 8, International Women's Day, and launched locally last May 31 at Powerbooks Greenbelt.

The publication of the book is accompanied by a major global campaign aimed at empowering the next generation of women, including an online exhibit and a series of international events and gatherings.

"Entertaining, challenging, funny and thought provoking, the book includes 105 entries, representing 57 countries and virtually every populated region of the globe," says its publisher. Some notable contributors are Queen Rania of Jordan, singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco, novelist Zadie Smith, and many more.

"In contributions that include photographs, songs, poems, paintings, collages and prose, young women discuss their lives, sharing the differences between their worlds and their mother's worlds. These brave women boldly address the challenges they and their cultures face, wielding their power to create positive social change. Israeli singer Achinoam Nini tells how her life changed when she gave birth; Bolivian painter Valentina Campos celebrates the close ties between grandmothers and granddaughters; Def poet Aya DeLeon fantasizes about going clubbing if women ran the hip hop industry; and Toyin Sokefun of Nigeria explores the space between society's 'ideal beauty' and women's self-images."

For more information, readers can also log onto www.imow.org

A clash of cultures over the table

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

FILIPINOS TRAVELING IN CHINA HAVE NO problem adapting to food, unless these are exotic items, like bear's paw, stewed rat, or roasted snake. Unlike Americans who balk at eating fish head or our favorite *lechon* head, complete with an apple in its snout, we have no problem with serving things whole. We are also comfortable with having live fish, shrimp or crab cooked at table-side, while others find this mode of cooking and serving inhumane.

Gilda Cordero-Fernando was once commissioned to write a Filipino cookbook for a British publisher, who insisted on editing out important details like watching a crab or shrimp turn from dull black or grey to a delicious bright red as it is being cooked. She was told that crabs, for example, had to be electrocuted with a rod before being cooked. Gilda refused to be edited on the grounds that we may be inhumane to things we eat, but we are—or we try to be—humane to people. Needless to say the book never saw print.

The late E. Aguilar Cruz once told me of a group of American women, members of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) who complained about the wild birds that were being peddled along the Pampanga stretch of MacArthur Highway (this was in the days before the North Luzon Expressway was built). The concerned women tried to influence public opinion on the way the birds were tied upside-down in the heat. Perhaps they didn't know that when these birds were dressed for cooking, their feathers were plucked out while they were still alive to maintain the tenderness of the meat. Did they even know that ducks were not slaughtered quickly through decapitation but drowned in a bowl of vinegar, again to preserve its flavor and tenderness when cooked.

As a boy, it was traumatic for me to watch live catfish or eel being bludgeoned to death by our cook or to hear a pig squeal before its throat was slit and its blood gathered in a basin before it was roasted. Still watching how the food was prepared had no effect on my enjoyment of the end product.

A generation reared in the airconditioned comfort of supermarkets probably thinks milk comes from tetra packs and some fruits come fresh from a can. I knew there was a generation gap when some of the kids at a family reunion started to cry when the adults attacked the *lechon* on the table. For most of us, it was just *lechon de leche*, but for a younger generation the roasted pig was "Babe," the cute talking piglet from the movie. Some kids would not eat fish and lobster, calling the wonderful food on the platters "Nemo" or "Sebastian." I never thought I would see the so-called clash of cultures or clash of history in my lifetime, but I experience it first-hand with my nephews and nieces.

Well over two decades ago, Doreen Fernandez took me on a research trip to Victoria, Tarlac, and I watched and learned as she documented the cooking and preparation of a goat, taking pictures from the time the doomed creature was tied up bleating in a backyard till it was magically transformed into a variety of delicious dishes. Ilocanos, she concluded, left nothing to waste. Every part of the goat was cooked and eaten, except for the horns and hooves which were placed on the table between the platters and photographed as well.

In a fabulous restaurant in Osaka, Japan, where our hospitable former Consul General Antonio Villamayor would take guests like former President Fidel V. Ramos, they served seafood fresh—so fresh that one dish was sashimi plucked out of a live fish. The fish was laid out on a platter, its head and tail still whole and moving, but its body sliced up and ready to eat. While it was good, I still prefer sashimi to be firm and cold rather than warm and chewy. Was this good preference or an experience of culture?

Food should be something we can ingest naturally without thinking, but because of culture and history we are drawn to the tastes of the familiar and are repelled by the unfamiliar. This explains the cliche that what is food to one is poison to another.

The best example here is the *kamaru* or mole cricket. One used to go to Everybody's Café in San Fernando, Pampanga, to taste this delicacy, but now it is a staple in Kapampangan restaurants in Manila. It is sauteed in garlic and onion and fried in such a way that it is crunchy on the outside and creamy on the inside. It is heavenly to some and revolting to others, just like balut or durian.

I'm adventurous with food and will try anything once, although I think I draw the line on the now legendary monkey brain taken fresh out of a live creature's cranium.

History has a lot to do with what we eat and do not eat, but until Doreen Fernandez came along, food was not considered worthy of academic study. Half a century ago Nick Joaquin already suggested looking at history from a different viewpoint: rather than building on important events pegged on the names and deeds of famous people, he directed our attention to things that made us what we are today. What would have happened if we did not experience the first globalization in the 16th-century when now familiar fruits and vegetables were exchanged between the Philippines and Mexico? What would Filipino life be without corn or chocolate, chico, sayote and camote? Can we imagine life without *guisado*?

If food defines who we are, it may be a way to catch that elusive thing we call national identity.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.

Illiterate

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

IT LOOKS LIKE WE HAVE AN EXTENDED LENTEN penance period in the Philippines. Every start of a new school year, the broadcast and print media lead the nation in self-flagellation over the dismal state of our educational system.

I think that's needed, but I also hope that after this first week of classes, we can continue to face up to the problems in our schools, going beyond the usual lamentations.

The last few days we've been treated to the INQUIRER Investigative Team report on the state of education in the Philippines. Tuesday's installment focused on the Philippines' low scores in the international Trends in Math and Science Study (TIMSS) conducted in 2003. The INQUIRER featured our scores in comparison with those of the United States and several neighboring Asian countries where we were at the bottom of the league.

Peer review

Curious, I went into the Internet and was able to download the highlights from the TIMSS report. Mind you, "highlights" here still meant more than a hundred pages but the data had been "crunched" to the most essential points, allowing more people to review and analyze the numbers.

Let me bring out the major points I uncovered in a fairly quick browse-and-analyze session:

First, we should know who conducts the study and what their methodology is. TIMSS is administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) under the US Department of Education. The center is described as "the primary federal entity for collecting, analyzing and reporting data related to education in the United States and other nations."

Now why would the US government be interested in looking at other nations' educational performance? Mainly it's for comparison purposes, a kind of review among peers. For years now, educators in the US have warned that American students are lagging behind their peers in other developed countries, especially in the fields of science and math. The educators rightly realize that their status as the world's most powerful nation could be threatened if they don't improve on their educational system. TIMSS is there to help the US keep track of its educational system's performance.

There have been three rounds of TIMSS conducted so far, the first in 1995, then 1999 and the latest in 2003. The last survey's results were released in December 2004. It's an impressive study, involving students at the fourth and eight grade levels in 46 countries. (I presume that eight-grade level in the Philippines means 2nd year high school, given that we have six elementary school years.) The samples are quite large in each country; for the Philippines, it was 6,917 students from 137 schools.

The tests are designed to probe into "PSI" or problem solving and inquiry tasks, looking at how students are able to integrate information in various math and science fields, some of which I'll name later. The tests were similar throughout the world, with efforts made to adjust for cultural differences.

It's interesting that fourth graders were not allowed to use calculators but for the eight graders, countries were left to decide on their own whether they'd allow it or not. American students were allowed calculators "to reflect conditions in the real world."

Problem areas

The test results were broken down by countries, test areas and even sex. For the US, the results were also broken down according to poverty measures, ethnicities, public/private schools.

To show the wealth of information that's in these statistics, let me share some insights I got from a very quick one-hour browsing of the data for the Philippines. The percentages here refer to correct scores.

In the math tests, our 8th graders seemed to struggle with measurements (e.g., temperature differences), scoring 35 percent compared to the international average of 44 percent. But they did badly in algebra (23 percent compared to the international average of 45 percent) and geometry (11 percent for Filipinos, 28 percent internationally). The fourth graders were again not too bad with measurements, but did miserably with basic numbers (e.g., proportions). I suspect all this has something to do with the difficulties students have with abstractions. It doesn't help that these concepts have to be taught in English to students who can barely speak the language.

In the sciences, our fourth graders fared very badly with the life sciences (5 percent compared to the international average of 29 percent), but did better with the earth sciences (33 percent compared to 37 percent internationally).

That situation is reversed with 8th graders: they did better in the life sciences (45 percent versus an international average of 58 percent) but fared poorly in the earth sciences (38 percent versus 62 percent internationally). Their worst scores were in chemistry, with only 5 percent compared to an international average of 46 percent.

Are the learning problems rooted in teaching methods? In textbooks? In the teachers' own grasp of the subjects? That's what we should be probing into, and finding remedial measures for.

Functional literacy

There's more waiting to be analyzed in these statistics. If it's any consolation, the Philippines did show improvement in both math and science scores between 1999 and 2003.

I'm also intrigued by the gender aspect. In the US, girls have lower scores than boys for math and science. In the Philippines, it's the reverse.

TIMSS is important to help us assess how functional our literacy is. For years now, we've boasted about having one of the world's highest literacy rates and how that literacy, together with some command of English, allows us to export workers to the world. The TIMSS results warn us that we could lose our edge for the overseas labor market, even as we stagnate with domestic development because the next generation won't be able to tackle simple problems that require literacy in math and science.

We need to maximize the use of these tests. Some years back, I was asked by the UP School of Economics to analyze results from the National Elementary Achievement Test (NEAT) and the National Secondary Achievement Test (NSAT) and I was amazed at how much information was waiting to be mined from the data. Unfortunately, the two exams degenerated into a contest among schools, with teachers giving review classes and test results leaking out so the tests were no longer required for all schools. If it were properly administered, NSAT could be an important monitoring tool.

Alas, we maltreat our statistics. Politicians and government officials mangle the figures to suit their own interests, or, neglect the figures, failing to use them for policy reforms. Our leaders' attitudes toward statistics are themselves telling, showing how we've failed to educate Filipinos, even those from an earlier generation, about the value of science and math. Governed by dishonest illiterates, can we dare hope for a better educational system?

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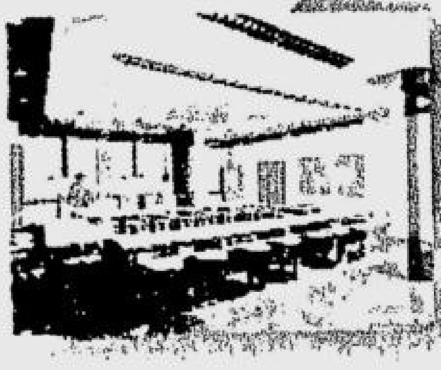

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A message many need to hear

THIS IS IN REACTION TO RINA JIMENEZ-David's column titled "What about the teenage mom?" (PDI, 5/12/06) The way I see it, Sandin Lee's teenage mother was another sad casualty of our society's obsession with "sexual and reproductive rights."

A 14-year-old has no business having sex with men who have no commitment to her? This is playing with fire. We don't put up with kids playing with fire; we get them to stop the dangerous behavior at once. We don't tell them, "It's okay if you play with fire, just wear asbestos gloves."

David asks what kind of information the mom received. I ask: Did anyone tell her to consider that what she was doing with her life was wrong? If you're going to advise persons not to engage in unprotected sex, go one better: advise them not to have sex, period.

This simple message may be incompatible with the values of pop culture, but it is a message many need to hear.

—MICHAEL MAPA,
mikemapa@yahoo.com

A call to arms for pensioners

THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT THE MONTHLY Social Security System pension is not enough to purchase even just the medicines required and needed by elderly and retired employees.

To alleviate the plight of pensioners, which is getting to be more difficult each day with the unending rise in the prices of basic goods, Rep. Douglas Cagas and Rep. Eduardo V. Roquero filed House Bill No. 1549 and HB 3286, respectively. Both were filed in 2004.

Unfortunately the bills, and others of similar intent filed by other lawmakers much earlier, are sleeping in Congress.

May I therefore call on all SSS pensioners, as well as their relatives, associates and sympathizers, to visit, call, write or text their respective representatives or as many members of the House of Representatives as they can, to convince them into "reactivating" the bills; then to constantly follow up with them, by any means of communication, the passage of the bills into law.

We, pensioners, cannot expect the government to increase or adjust our benefits without our prodding. We will never get the benefits we deserve in these difficult times if we keep on with our indifference. Let us speak in one solid, big, loud voice of woe.

Please text your full name, result of talk and name of congressman for record purposes so that we, in turn, can reciprocate their good deed in some later time.

—CESAR ABELLO ZABALA SR.
CP No. 09153708361

Albano's unresponsive response

AS A REJOINDER TO EMMANUEL ALBANO'S letter (PDI, 5/22/06), let me say that he did respond to my letter but he did not answer my questions. The questions are no different from those that I e-mailed to the Office of the House Speaker on Dec. 17 and 22, 2005, and on March 1, 2006. I e-mailed the questions to Albano who, in an earlier letter (PDI, 3/1/06), urged the Senate to debate with the House on Charter change. None of the e-mails merited a reply from the Speaker or Albano, for which reason I wrote one for the INQUIRER. (PDI, 4/13/06)

Albano's letter was certainly unresponsive. It only made clearer to me that the Cha-cha proponents only tell what they want to tell the people, not what the people want or need to know. Unless they fully answer the questions I raised—the problems Cha-cha seeks to solve, the roots of the problems, and a logical cause and effect analysis of why and how the parliamentary system but not the presidential system will solve both problems and roots—people may be herded into signing and eventually voting for Cha-cha, but they will not be fully enlightened on the matter.

A shift to the parliamentary system will only make the ruling party very powerful. Conversely, the minority opposition party will be so weakened that the principle of checks and balances will be greatly undermined. And removing the term limits will perpetuate the majority party's hold on power.

It does not follow that because the parliamentary system made other nations progressive, it will do the same for us. There are other major factors that make a nation prosperous, such as the character of its people.

Albano could not have chosen a better example than Thailand's Prime Minister Thaksin, who showed that if the power to dissolve parliament and remove high government officials is vested in a clique of government officials with mutually beneficial relationship, they would not voluntarily oust themselves. Not even people power could boot Thaksin out of office, so the Thai king had to intervene. Even then, after resigning, he bounced back into power—courtesy of the parliamentary system!

—MARCELO L. TECSON,
San Miguel, Bulacan

'Hiya' and silent majority

I CLEARLY REMEMBER THE COMMERCIALS of the Development Bank of the Philippines when I was in college, sometime in the late 1980s. One of them featured a man extolling two virtues that we Filipinos seemed to have forgotten. "*Buhayin natin ang delicadeza; buhayin natin ang palabra de honor.*" (Let's have delicadeza and word of honor again.) Thus were these two virtues ingrained in my mind.

The ad might have seemed corny, spoofed in TV shows and in friendly banter. But it was powerful and timely and timeless.

As an INQUIRER columnist noted in one of his columns, *hiya* is very similar to—or, maybe, it even encompasses—these two traits, and "*amor propio.*"

These must be the traits we should look for in our leaders, especially in our President. Clearly, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo doesn't have these traits. She swore before the grave of Rizal not to run for president in 2004, but she ran anyway. That clearly showed lack of *palabra de honor*.

Calling a Comelec official during the canvassing of ballots is not just a lapse in judgement, it's lack of delicadeza, it's illegal, it's unlawful. You don't know your laws, you don't deserve to be president. You don't get the votes, you shouldn't be sitting in Malacañang pretending to be president, and a bad one at that.

It irks me when people present themselves as members of the silent majority, then exhort us to let bygones be bygones and just let GMA reign. Last I checked, the majority wants GMA out. Maybe they should qualify themselves as the silent majority of the minority who supports GMA. The noisy minority of this minority being Michael Defensor, Raul Gonzalez, Jose de Venecia and their ilk.

There are 80 million Filipinos. For sure, there is one Filipino who can lead us better than she does. At the rate she's going, even a monkey can do a better job as president.

Other people worry so much about the opposition—the *trapos* in particular, the Estradas and Marcoses and their minions wanting to do a comeback performance. But these are not the only people comprising the opposition. The majority of Filipinos are the opposition, the true silent majority. The ones mentioned above are the noisy minority of the majority. They are no different from Ms Arroyo. We don't want them, we don't support them.

History is about our story, the story of the common *tao*, the true majority. We make history, we choose our future and we can do something about it. Let us straighten our priorities.

Bring back the sense of *hiya* into our culture, into our government, into our lives. Throw out the "*walanghiya*" in the government, unmask those in the opposition. Let's start with the biggest one in Malacañang.

—DENNIS L. REYES,
3322 Sonoma St.,
Torrance, Ca 90503 USA

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GMA rebuts accusations she won't tolerate dissent

From page A1

forces to respect the law in hunting down rebels.

"My government wants to strengthen democracy and I hope people will understand that the President is against dictatorships," Ms Arroyo said.

"I aim to maintain stability and uphold the freedoms guaranteed by the Constitution," Ms Arroyo said in a phone-patch interview with dzMM radio.

The President said she had ordered the police, military and the Department of Justice to take immediate steps to put a stop to the killings.

In the case of slain journalists, she said that the authorities had pinpointed and filed cases against some of the killers.

"There had been many arrests and in some cases, there are tracker teams now hunting down other suspects," she said in Filipino.

"Whether they are in the media, militant groups or they are just ordinary citizens, these crimes should be given resolution," she said.

An INQUIRER tally showed at least 228 activists have been killed around the country since Ms Arroyo assumed office in 2001.

Leftist leaders accused her administration of being behind the killing and abduction of activists.

13TH CABINET meeting as well as that of the board of the National Anti-Poverty Council and National Economic Development Authority is held at the Palace with President Arroyo presiding. LYN RILLON

Use judicial process

In the strongest statement to date from a top government official on the spate of human rights abuses being blamed on the military, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz Jr. said government forces should respect the "judicial process" in dealing with suspected rebels.

Cruz, however, stopped short of censuring the military as well as the police for the killing and abduction of militants.

"I've been telling the (Cabinet) security cluster it's important to gather evidence, file charges against people conducting armed rebellion against the government, arrest them and put them in jail," Cruz said.

"I have said this over and over again, the decision has to be facts-based and evidence-based," said Cruz.

"Use the judicial process. That's the right way to do it under a democratic form of government," he stressed.

Previously, government and military officials had dismissed allegations of military and police involvement in the killings as leftist propaganda and said the murders were part of internal purges within the rebel ranks.

Joint cooperation

Cruz said he had been discussing with Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno how they could revive an executive order that calls for cooperation between military and police forces in urban areas in effecting arrests.

"Hopefully, we can come up with an agreement between the DND and the DILG so there will be a joint directive to the AFP and the PNP to remind them to reinforce (the directive) that they should arrest people with warrants," Cruz said.

Communist hit list?

Asked if he was just issuing a reminder to government troops against conducting warrantless arrests, Cruz replied: "No, (we want) to revitalize the coordination, especially in the urban areas."

The seeming propaganda war that the killings had sparked took another turn yesterday when a letter was circulated around Malacañang claiming that the Communist Party of the Philippines had marked Ms Arroyo and 15 Cabinet officials and allies for liquidation.

Reporters covering the Palace each got a letter dated March 29, the 37th anniversary of the CPP, from the "Kawanihan sa Impormasyon Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas."

The letter said that the "Bagong Hukbong Bayan" had come up with a list of "reactionary politicians" and "enemies of the country."

The targets

"The following will be liquidated by (the group)," it said in Filipino.

It listed 16 people, including the President, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor, National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita, Rep. Constantino Jaraula, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos, Sen. Miriam Santiago, Rep. Imee Marcos, Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, Speaker Jose de Venecia, Public Works Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, Rep. Prospero Nograles, Rep. Luis Villafuerte and Press Secretary and presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye.

Asked to comment on his inclusion on the alleged hit list, Bunye said: "These threats have not deterred me from performing my duty. I will continue to perform my duties the best way I can and the best way I know how."

Police detain suspect

THE POLICE IN PANGASINAN, said they had arrested a suspect in the May 16 killing of Jose Doton, secretary general of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan).

Senior Supt. Alan Purisima, provincial police director, identified the suspect as Joel Flores, 28, in a press conference held five days after his arrest.

Doton, 62, and his brother Cancio, 57, were on a motorcycle on their way home to Barangay Caboloan in San Nicolas town when two men on a motorcycle fired at them. Doton died instantly while Cancio was wounded.

Purisima said police started conducting surveillance operations on Flores, of Asingan town, when a check with the Land Transportation Office's records showed that he owned the motorcycle used by the two suspects.

Reports said Flores learned about the surveillance and poked his gun at policemen on June 1. This prompted the police to arrest him.

Purisima said Flores's gun was checked to find out if its shells matched the empty shells recovered from the scene where Doton was attacked.

The test showed that the six empty shells came from Flores's firearm, Purisima said.

With a report from Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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Death penalty is dead

From page A1

The abolition would seem to serve as a good send-off gift for Ms Arroyo, who is to go on a foreign trip from June 23 to July 2.

Palace sources said Ms Arroyo would visit Libya, then go to Rome and the Vatican for an expected audience with the Pontiff, before proceeding to Spain.

In April, Ms Arroyo said she would commute death sentences to life imprisonment, drawing mixed reactions from crime victims and death penalty opponents—and flak from critics, who said she was only after support from the Catholic Church.

Anticrime watchdogs, which had warned that the abolition of capital punishment would only encourage criminals, immediately denounced the congressional action.

'Voice of victims'

"This bill is being railroaded like a bullet train," said Dante Jimenez, founding chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption. "This is being railroaded so when the President goes to Europe she can tell (Europeans) that the Philippines no longer has this law."

Jimenez also said: "We were never invited by Congress nor by Malacañang. They are afraid to hear the voices of the victims ... Why weaken the law? If you weaken the law you strengthen the criminals."

The country's Roman Catholic Church leaders also appeared to welcome Congress' move.

Asked for reaction, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' media office referred reporters to an earlier statement by CBCP president Angel Lagdameo that the Church was convinced that the death penalty had not served its purpose since criminality and corruption were still rampant.

The CBCP had welcomed previous actions by both the executive and legislative branches toward abolishing the death penalty as a "humanitarian act."

Sen. Joker Arroyo, chair of the Senate committee on justice and human rights, said senators crossed party lines to approve the measure.

Ms Arroyo had written Senate President Franklin Drilon certifying the abolition bill as urgent. Her certification paved the way for the bill's approval on third reading.

Sen. Jinggoy Ejercito Estrada cast the lone abstention.

"I would like to register a vote of abstention because I am a coaccused in a plunder case, which carries the penalty of death," he said.

Jinggoy and his father, detained former President Joseph Estrada, are on trial for plunder, an offense punishable by death.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson initially opposed the abolition but withdrew his objection at the last minute after Drilon introduced an amendment providing for the penalty of life imprisonment or reclusion perpetua with no parole.

Moral stature

Senator Arroyo said abolishing the death penalty would be consistent with the Philippines' standing as a Christian country and boost its moral standing before the world community.

When enacted into law, the abolition of the death penalty would benefit the more than 1,000 convicts languishing on death row at the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa, he said.

"All of them are commuted now under the Senate bill; they would no longer suffer the penalty of death," Arroyo said.

He said the Senate bill retained the President's power to grant pardons.

Those who voted for the abolition were its principal authors, Arroyo, Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Manuel Villar and Richard Gordon.

They were joined by Drilon, Lacson, Ralph Recto, Edgardo Angara, Pia Cayetano, Francis Pangilinan, Jamby Madrigal, Alfredo Lim, Senate President Pro Tempore Juan Flavier, Mar Roxas, Ramon "Bong" Revilla and Luisa "Loi" Ejército Estrada.

Arroyo said RA 7659 should be abolished because the death penalty had not proven to be a deterrent to crime and had become a dead-letter law.

In his sponsorship speech last week, Arroyo said the death penalty had been a dead law because no President since the rule of Ferdinand Marcos, wanted to carry out the death penalty law, except in two cases.

Long overdue

"What's the point of having a law that is never been carried out?" Arroyo said.

On the proposal of Caloocan Rep. Luis "Baby" Asistio, the House approved an amendment to its final version, striking out the term "reclusion perpetua" but retaining the phrase "life imprisonment."

"He (Asistio) argued that with respect to life imprisonment, it would be imprisonment in perpetuity until the (natural death) of the convict unless the President would extend clemency," said Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, the bill's principal author. *With reports from Luige A. del Puerto and Jerome Aning*

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Evidence in quarry scam disappears

WHAT'S INSIDE

Army general says MILF camps JI refuge /A20

CHR probes report of abuse of 'Tagaytay 5' /A20

Old-timers slam 'uglification' of Baguio /A21

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

OFFICIALS OF PAMPANGA TOLD HOUSE INVESTIGATORS THEY lost original copies of receipts that could provide clues on how taxes from quarrying in lahar areas in the province were being stolen.

The documents, officials said, could explain the "drastic drop" in quarry revenues when Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid was Pampanga governor.

The officials made the admission when the House committee on good government, chaired by Iloilo Rep. Arthur Defensor, resumed the hearings on Tuesday, or after more than a year of lull since May 18, 2005.

Provincial administrator Fidel Arcenas reported that the gratuitous permits issued by Lapid were missing as he read an affidavit by Regina Vitug, the environment and natural resources officer of the Pampanga government.

The permits allowed local authorities and contractors, like the China Waters, to extract and haul sand without paying taxes.

The Chinese company alone got 20,000 truckloads worth P6 million for its project to strengthen the tail dike of the FVR Megadike in Bacolor, according to the late provincial administrator Benalfre Galang when he faced the committee last year.

In the same affidavit, Vitug said she submitted the original copies to Galang. She said she failed to retrieve these before the official died on Oct. 17, 2005.

Defensor said Vitug faces charges of infidelity in the custody of public documents.

He also summoned the presence of Vitug in the next hearing in August. The same summon would be issued to provincial treasurer Vergel Yabut who was supposed to submit the copies of all gratuitous permits issued by Lapid from 1991 to 2001 and from 2002 to 2004, the former governor's last term.

Monday's hearing continued to focus on the causes of the "discrepancy" of P337 million between the collections of the state-owned Natural Resources Development Corp. and the provincial quarry task force from 1999 to 2001 and 2002 to 2004.

Aside from giving sand at no cost, Galang had also attributed the disparity to the corruption by some checkers and the drop in the demand by the construction industry.

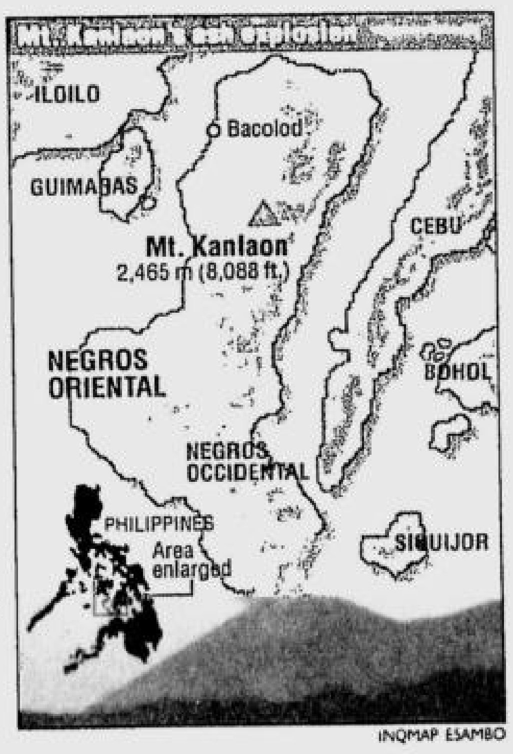
Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico earlier pursued the issue of alleged illegal issuance of gratuitous permits as possible basis for graft charges against Lapid.

Vice Gov. Joseller Guiao told the committee that those permits were issued without approval from the provincial board.

But Galang, in his past testimony, had defended Lapid, saying the provincial tax ordinance granted the former governor that power.

Gov. Mark Lapid, the senator's son, did not attend the hearing on Tuesday.

Defensor ordered the committee to seek an explanation from the Commission on Audit on why the agency turned down at least five requests of Guiao to conduct a special audit on the finances of the provincial government.



INQMAP ESAMBO

Kanlaon acts up; warning raised

BACOLOD CITY—MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS and other trekkers have been advised to defer any planned climbs at the Mt. Kanlaon park area until further notice after Mt. Kanlaon emitted smoke over the weekend.

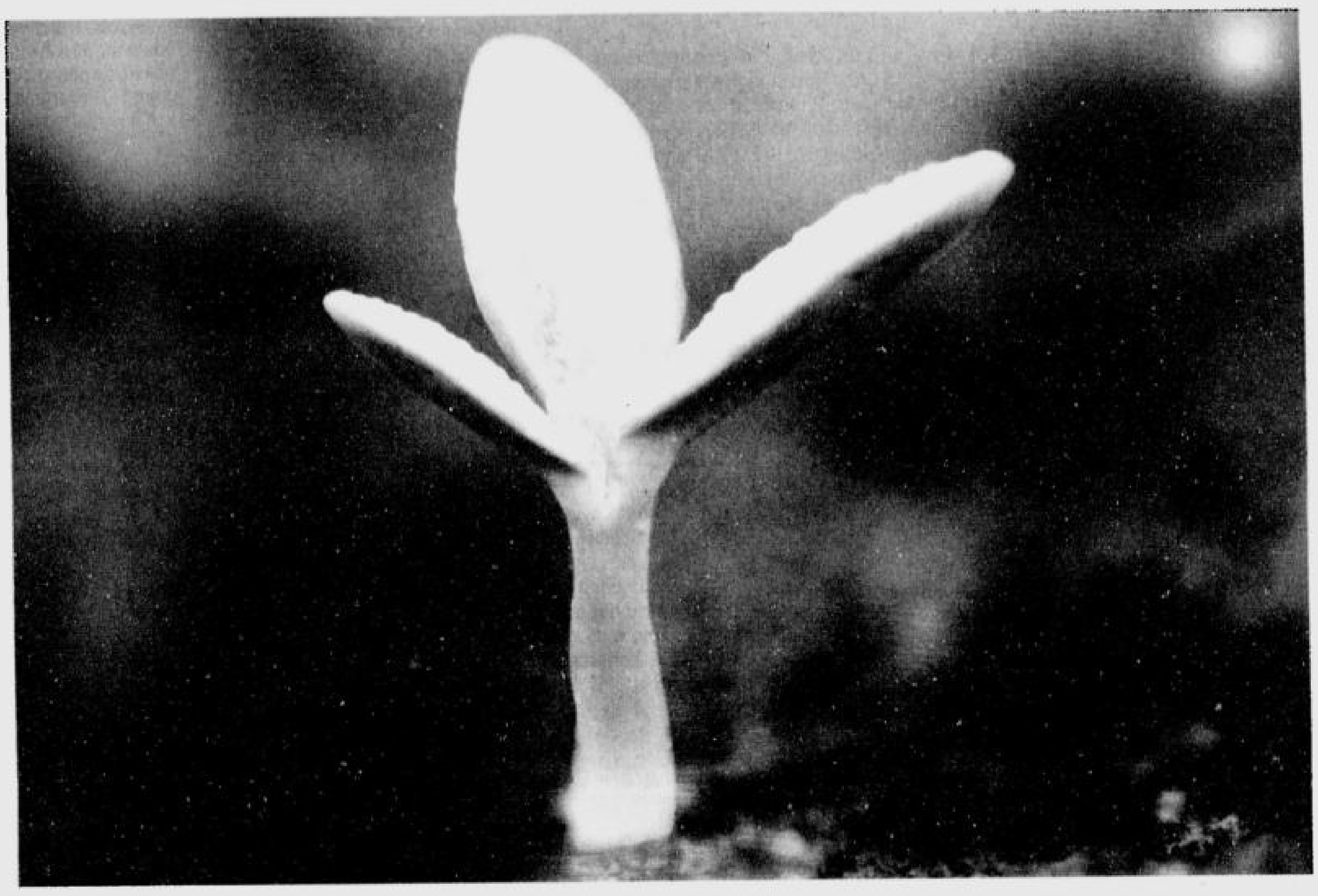
The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), in an advisory released Monday, also reminded people that the four-kilometer permanent danger zone of Kanlaon Volcano on Negros Island remained off limits to the public, particularly at this time when sudden ash and steam explosions might occur anytime.

Kanlaon Volcano briefly emitted steam and ash Saturday afternoon but the Phivolcs has not raised any alert level yet, the Provincial Disaster Management Team of Negros Occidental said yesterday.

The Phivolcs advisory said that at 2:30 p.m Saturday, dirty white steam was seen rising at a maximum height of 800 meters before it drifted northwest.

The Phivolcs, however, sought to give assurances that no earthquakes were detected by its seismic station, based in Canlaon City in Negros Oriental.

Ash deposits were confined to the upper northwest slope of the volcano, according to the Phivolcs. *Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*



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Ifugao children don't really wear these biodegradable garments to school, but they are authentic reproductions of ancient Ifugao clothes that villagers still recall were being worn in ancient times.

Hawaii, Isabela pact to ease flow of nurses

ILAGAN, ISABELA—THE PARTnership being worked out between the island-state of Hawaii in the United States and Isabela province is expected to boost the hiring of nurses from this province and the improvement of the quality of nursing education here, officials said.

Hawaii Rep. Dennis Arakaki, who was in the country last week for a 13-day official visit, said the employment of Isabela's nurses was just one of the "promising potentials" that the two governments could establish through a sisterhood pact expected to be signed this year.

"We have a very critical shortage of nurses in the state of Hawaii ... (and) we also know that the Philippines provides a large number of Filipino nurses. This is one area we want to develop because you have a resource that we could use," Arakaki told provincial officials here last week.

Bridge

Arakaki visited the province and submitted to Vice Gov. Ramon Reyes, the acting governor, a copy of the House Concurrent Resolution 230 of Hawaii's 23rd Legislature, which approved the signing of an agreement between Isabela and the US state.

"The sister-state relationship would reinforce and cement [a] common bridge for understanding and mutual assistance between ethnic Filipinos of both the State of Hawaii and the province of Isabela, known as the 'Rice Granary of the North,'" the resolution read.

Arakaki said the partnership would also look into means of improving the quality of nursing education in the province, "so that the nurses who do come to Hawaii will be trained and qualified."

Hawaii concerns

Other areas of collaboration include business, trade, industry, sports, health care, social welfare and tourism, which, Arakaki said, is "one of Hawaii's forte."

Gov. Maria Gracia Cielo Padaca said the Isabela-Hawaii sisterhood pact would not only benefit Isabelinos in the country but "provide a way and a reason for Isabelinos in Hawaii to unite."

"Isabelinos there will have a stronger voice, and the government of Hawaii will have an easier and more effective way to serve them," Padaca said in a statement sent from the United States, where she is on a study tour.

Padaca said the idea of the sisterhood pact came up when she visited Hawaii and met with members of their House of Representatives in November last year.

Board support

The following month, the Isabela provincial board passed a resolution that authorized Padaca, on behalf of the Isabela government, to enter into a sisterhood agreement with Hawaii.

Padaca submitted the board resolution to Hawaii Gov. Linda Lingle during the Hawaii governor's visit to the country in January.

On April 13, the Hawaiian government complemented the Isabela board's resolution with the approval of House Resolution 230. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Iloilo governor won't let STL into his province

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—ILOILO GOV. NIEL Tupas Sr. has joined the Catholic Church here in opposing the entry of Small Town Lottery (STL) into the province.

Tupas said he would block the entry of STL in the province's 42 towns and one city.

"I do not share the government's propaganda that STL will eradicate the illegal numbers game we know locally as daily double," Tupas said in a letter addressed to the social action center of the Jaro Archdiocese.

"Allowing the STL to operate will only erode the moral values of the people, and teach them to entrust their future to luck instead of working hard to earn a livelihood," said Tupas.

Tupas, a close ally of Senate President Franklin Drilon, broke ties with President Macapagal-Arroyo last year.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas and Vice Mayor Guillermo de la Llana, however, said they would wait for the decision of the city council, which would conduct public hearings on the issue.

"I will support the decision of the council," said Treñas.

The national government earlier gave the go signal for a one-year trial run for STL being sponsored by the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) as an alternative to the illegal numbers game "jueteng."

But the move has been opposed by various sectors, including the Church.

At least 120 priests and 14 other Church leaders have signed a statement opposing STL's entry in the Jaro Archdiocese.

"If government cannot even curb illegal gambling, how well can we trust it to find solution to widespread corruption? Is the government telling us that the best way to solve this problem is to make it legal? If the government cannot provide its people with a more decent and productive lifestyle, then something must be wrong with its leadership!" the priests said in their statement last month.

ROUNDUP

Climbers' bodies found

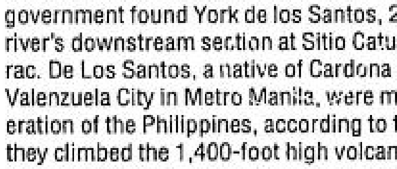
CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—The bodies of two mountaineers who drowned at the Pasig-Potrero River while on their way to Mt. Pinatubo on May 31 were found Sunday, police said. Rescue workers of the Porac municipal government found York de los Santos, 25, and Bjorn Baquiran, 24, at the river's downstream section at Sitio Catusig in Barangay Inararo, also in Porac. De Los Santos, a native of Cardona town in Rizal, and Baquiran, of Valenzuela City in Metro Manila, were members of the Mountaineering Federation of the Philippines, according to the police. Together with 24 others, they climbed the 1,400-foot high volcano via the Apo Namalyari route, where the river drains out but strong waves due to heavy rains swept the two victims at about 3 p.m. on May 31, police said. ***Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk***

Forest guard found dead

BACOLOD CITY—A volunteer forest guard was found dead on Saturday morning, a few meters from a river in Barangay Igmaya-an, Don Salvador Benedicto town, Negros Occidental. The body of Bantay Bukid member Jose Laureto Fuentes, 48, bore hack, stab and slash wounds in the neck, head, arms and wrists, said town police chief Senior Insp. Leonardo Angcon. Fuentes, a resident of Purok Logdeck, Barangay Igmaya-an, was into the money lending business and was last seen by his neighbors on Friday, attending a seminar at the DSB Multi-Purpose Hall, Angcon said. Police said the victim's two wallets and his cellular phone were missing. Angcon said they believed that the suspects robbed Fuentes first and then killed him when he resisted. The killers also took the victim's bolo.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

Banana growers seek price hike



DAVAO CITY—Members of the Federation of Upland Banana Growers, Inc. here protested the rejection by the Davao Fruits Corp. of their demand to amend production and sales agreements. Virgilio Lago, a federation official, said they would go to court if Davao Fruits continued to ignore their demand. "The company has continued to thumb down the federation's appeal for price adjustments for almost two years now," Lago said. He said the contract growers have been seeking price adjustments because of the rising cost of production. The federation, which has 800 members including lumad, maintains a 300-hectare banana plantation in six villages. Lago said the company pays them $2 per box of 13.5 kilograms but this could hardly compensate for their expenses. He said his group wants an increase of 50 cents per box.

Judy Quiros, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Soldiers stab driver dead

BACACAY, Albay—Unidentified soldiers stabbed dead a van driver and one of his companions in Barangay San Isidro, Libmanan, Camarines Sur Saturday night. Rolly Bermundo, 38, and Mariano Belisario Jr., both residents of Barangay Igang here, were pronounced dead on arrival at the Bicol Medical Center in Naga City. Nilo Bermundo, Rolly's father, appealed to the Philippine Army in Bicol to identify the soldiers who killed his son and Belisario. Bermundo said his son was driving a van when he bumped a still unidentified soldier. He said his son decided to stop the van to take the victim to the hospital but the soldiers grabbed the two inside the van and stabbed them several times. ***Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***

P. Paran-Llorca; 50

PENICULA "Penny" Paran-Llorca, 50, aunt of Southern Luzon Bureau editorial assistant Jojo Los Baños, died on June 2. She is survived by daughter Andrea Marie; sisters Tessie, Azon, Baby and Luz; brothers Ramon, Boy and Roger; aunts, uncle, nephews and nieces. Her remains lie at the L. G. Paran Chapel in Barangay Kimantong, Daraga, Albay. Interment is on June 10 at the Daraga Catholic Cemetery, after a 9 a.m. Mass at the family chapel.

DECLINING ENROLLMENT

Negros school woes manageable, say execs

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—THE SHORTage of teachers and classrooms in Negros Occidental and Bacolod City is minimal, education officials said as thousands of students returned to school Monday.

Unlike in other public schools in the country, the student population in public elementary and high schools in Negros Occidental has actually been dropping over the last five years, according to Dr. Eva Belicena, Negros Occidental schools superintendent.

Belicena attributed the decline in enrollment in the past five years to economic difficulties and to the fact that the Department of Education (DepEd) is now strictly enforcing a rule that if a pupil's grades did not meet the passing rate, he or she could not move on to the next grade, which may have discouraged some from returning to school.

Declining population

In 2002, elementary school enrollment in Negros Occidental was 236,000. It dropped to 233,000 in 2003, 230,000 in 2004 and 223,000 in 2005, she said.

High school enrollment was 90,169 in 2002, 92,865 in 2003, 93,522 in 2004 and 91,297 in 2005, she said.

On the state of classrooms in public schools in Negros Occidental, Belicena said that while on paper there are more classrooms than the existing number of classes, some are makeshift and run down and need to be repaired or replaced.

In the elementary level there are 6,026 classes and 6,637 instructional rooms and 1,172 non-instructional rooms, she said.

In the high school level there are 1,813 classes with 1,931 instructional rooms and 348 non-instructional rooms, Belicena added.

ELEMENTARY school pupils queue for free school bags with supplies at the Binmaley I Central School in Binmaley, Pangasinan. The town's government is supplying poor pupils with bags and free supplies in time for school opening.

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

As to teacher shortage, Belicena said about 30 more are needed in the elementary level and 50 for high school, which is minimal compared to other parts of the country.

Dr. Milagros Gonzales, Bacolod schools division superintendent, said the lack of school teachers in public elementary and high schools was very manageable because Mayor Evelio Leonardia has been allocating funds for teaching aides to augment the DepEd workforce.

She also said the lack of classrooms is only being felt at the Isla and Cabugwason elementary schools.

> '...the lack of school teachers in public elementary and high schools was very manageable...'

No land

At Isla, she said, the difficulty is the lack of land area to build more classrooms, while at Cabugwason the new school there already has four classrooms and more are under construction so the shortage will be addressed by next school year.

To decongest public schools, the DepEd is also providing education vouchers for students to go to private schools, but school officials said there are few takers.

The vouchers are for P4,000 a school year, which is not enough to pay for tuition in private schools so parents opt to keep their children in public schools, Belicena said.

She said the provincial schools division has 1,500 voucher slots.

In Bacolod City, Gonzales said they have a little more than 100 voucher slots but, like those in the province, there were also few takers.

CHR to probe abuse of 5 farmers tagged NPA rebels

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—The Commission on Human Rights is investigating the arrest and detention of five farmers in Tagaytay City who have been accused of being communist guerrillas.

Two CHR investigators visited the "Tagaytay 5" at their detention cell here yesterday to get their account of their April 28, 2006 arrest.

Aristedes Sarmiento, Axel Alexander Pinpin, Rico Ybañez, Michael Masayes and Riel Custodio were held by intelligence agents of the Cavite police and the Philippine Navy for supposedly plotting to overthrow the government.

May 1 plan

The purported attack, allegedly supported by rightists, would have coincided with Labor Day celebrations on May 1.

The five have been charged with rebellion at the Tagaytay regional trial court.

Nicanor Agustin, CHR investigator, said the probe was prompted by the request of Sarmiento's family and the group's friends and supporters.

He said the CHR would furnish the arresting officers with affidavits of the accused and would request them to submit counter-affidavits.

He said it could take a week before the commission issues a decision to start a formal inquiry.

The five said they welcome the role of the CHR in the investigation of their case.

"Hopefully, the CHR can help us unmask the abusive characters of our arresting officers and (the) Gestapo-style arrest they did on us. The human rights violations are very glaring in this case," Pinpin told the INQUIRER.

Torture

The five earlier claimed they were physically and mentally tortured by their police and military captors.

Lawyers of Sarmiento, Pinpin and Custodio have asked the court to dismiss the rebellion case against their clients and order their immediate release.

Veteran human rights lawyer and former Sen. Wigberto Tañada and lawyer Jose Manuel Diokno filed a motion to dismiss the case at the sala of Judge Edwin Larida, citing no probable cause.

They argued that despite the statement of the arresting officers that a gun and explosive materials were seized from the group, police had failed to issue a receipt that the items were recovered from them. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

TOOTS SOBERANO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

DAY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Thick, dark clouds that hover above a valley in Baguio City, and indicate either bad weather brewing or effects of pollution gathering in their bosoms, are punctured by golden rays of the sun that seem to signal hope for the environment.

Abused OFW decides to fight back, sue

PAGADIAN CITY—A FILIPINO maid is suing her former employer and recruiters for abuses that, she said, she suffered while working in Lebanon.

Virginia Bonbon, provincial labor officer, said the Department of Labor and Employment was helping the victim file charges against her former employer and at least three agencies who brought her to Lebanon.

Bonbon said the victim arrived in Lebanon in August and since then, suffered from abuses in the hands of her employers. She could not identify the employers.

The victim refuses to talk with men as a result of her traumatic experiences, said Bonbon.

She said the victim had asked Lolita Dumaboc, a neighbor, to speak on her behalf.

Dumaboc said Lara arrived in Manila from Lebanon on Feb. 25. She said a staff member from Blue Bay Employment Service fetched her at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. She was made to stay at its office.

"The relatives only knew about her arrival when an applicant from Pagadian recognized her and contacted her relatives," Dumaboc told the INQUIRER.

Dumaboc said the family immediately sought help from the Public Employment Service Office (Peso).

The Peso contacted Non-Stop Overseas Employment Corp., the Manila-based agency that originally recruited Lara.

Dumaboc said a brother of Lara flew to Manila and, on Feb. 27, she was brought to a psychiatry ward at the Philippine General Hospital. She stayed there until March 20.

Dumaboc said a medical certificate issued by the PGH showed that Lara was diagnosed with brief psychotic disorder and had suffered a miscarriage.

Liecel Trinidad, a medical officer at the PGH Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Medicine, said in Lara's medical record that she was "nonconversant, refused to eat, and had difficulty sleeping."

"Workouts were done and a pregnancy test showed positive results," said Trinidad in her medical report.

She said Lara's psychotic disorder could be the result of "sexual abuse and geographical separation from family."

Baina Abas-Flores of the Kaagapay Overseas Filipino Workers Resource and Service Center said that Lara had told them her male employer first sexually abused her while she was cooking.

After that, her female employer started beating her.

Then one day, her employers brought her out without telling where they were going.

Flores said Lara later learned she was being brought to the office of Diana Service Agency, her principal employer in Lebanon. Her Lebanese employers left her there.

Flores said the next day, she was handed her passport, an air ticket and $100. She was made to drink water.

Lara was accompanied to the airport by an unidentified Filipina.

"She told me that after drinking water, she lost track of the events. The victim was unconscious until she arrived in Manila on Feb. 25," Flores told INQUIRER.

Flores said Non-Stop, Diana and another agency, Blue Bay, were included in the charge sheet because they appeared to have connived with the Lebanese employers, who remained unidentified to this day.

She said Non-Stop refused to give the name of the employers.

"They cannot give us the name and instead offered P200,000 for Lara to drop the case against the Lebanese employers and the three agencies," Flores said. *Michael Sarcauga, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Army general says MILF camps refuge of JI members

THE BATTLE to wean away Mindanao's Muslim population from terrorism continues in the villages of Jolo, where Maj. Jane Gross, a pediatrician from the Tripler Army Medical Center, Hawaii, examines a girl in a photo made available by the US Army. AP

CARMEN, NORTH Cotabato—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) is still coddling members of the al-Qaida-linked Jemaah Islamiyah in their camps despite ongoing peace talks with the government, an Army general said.

Maj. Gen. Rodolfo Obaniana, chief of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said about 30 Indonesian JI militants were hiding in MILF camps in Mindanao.

The MILF vehemently denied the accusation.

"It's difficult for us to launch offensives against them because they are protected by these rebels. We are avoiding as much as possible a misencounter between soldiers and the rebels," Obaniana said.

"Our latest count of JIs in Mindanao is 30. Ten of them are in Central Mindanao," he added.

Obaniana did not mention if the leaders of the 30 JIs are Dulmatin and Omar Patek, who have bounties on their heads set by the US State Department.

Fighting to unite most of Southeast Asia into an Islamic state, the JI is blamed for several deadly attacks, including bombings in Bali, Indonesia in 2002 that killed 202 people.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told the INQUIRER by phone that the guerrilla organization was revolutionary and that the MILF did not need support from foreign organizations.

"That's not true. In fact, since July last year, there are no JI militants monitored in our areas. If they want to launch operations, they should coordinate with our troops (that has the) task of interdicting terror groups," he said.

Jerry Panaggulon, an MILF commander operating in Maguindanao who surrendered to the military, along with 24 followers, could not confirm or deny the existence of JI members in the guerrilla camps since he became a member of the MILF in 2000.

Panaggulon and at least 44 members of the Moro National Liberation Front-Misuari group, led by Lugem Daud, were accepted by Obaniana in simple ceremonies held at military headquarters here.

"It shows only that many of them are now for peace and development. They are legitimate rebels ... not recycled," said Col. Ruperto Pabustan, head of the Army's 602nd Infantry Brigade.

"For them to be utilized in safeguarding the peace and order in their respective areas, they will be appointed as civilian volunteers under the supervision of their mayors," he added. *Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

"Para matugunan ko ang sapat na pangangalaga sa kalusugan ng aking pamilya, mahalagang panatilihin ko ang pagiging malakas laban sa anumang sakit.

Kailangan ng tamang diet at palagiang exercise. Pagdating sa gamot, pinipili ko ang Ritemed para sa aking diabetes. De-kalidad na, magaan pa sa bulsa. Napagkakatiwalaan dahil gawa ng Unilab."

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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel
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Old-timers slam 'uglification' of Baguio

By Shayne Anne Basco, Beverly Castillo and Jahzeel Abihail Cruz
Contributors

THEY GREW UP SMELLING THE familiar scent of pine, experiencing foggy afternoons, and finding comfort in Baguio City's verdant carpet.

Cecile Afable, Leonora San Agustin and Virginia de Guia, now in their 80s and 90s, practically grew up with Baguio and witnessed how its pristine environment was slowly ruined by creeping development.

They are now fighting for a cause that will restore their beloved city, their home, to its glory. Their latest challenge? To stop a flyover project at Baguio's gateway.

This battle, they believe, is worth fighting for, even to their last breath.

'The smell of pine and the sight of Benguet lilies along Kennon used to make us excited to go home to Baguio'

NO OVERPASS
NO
Don't let BGH ... NO OVERPASS
NO

ENVIRONMENTALISTS ALL: (From left) Virginia de Guia, Cecile Afable and Leonora San Agustin want to preserve what is left of Baguio's pine cover by opposing the construction of a flyover at the city's gateway. EV ESPIRITU

The educator

Leonora Paraan San Agustin, 91, recalls her memories of Baguio like they happened only yesterday.

"The smell of pine and the sight of Benguet lilies along Kennon [Road] used to make us excited to go home to Baguio," says San Agustin, curator of the Baguio-Benguet Museum.

San Agustin graduated valedictorian at the Baguio City National High School and finished chemical engineering at the old Adamson School of Engineering in Manila to become the first woman chemical engineer in the country.

She found herself going back to her roots in Baguio. She taught English, Chemistry and Geology for 45 years at the Baguio Colleges Foundation (now the University of the Cordilleras).

"I had to go home to Baguio, and I literally became the *labandera* (laundrywoman) of my family," says San Agustin.

She never forgot to give back to her city. Aside from founding various women's organizations, such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) and the Lioness Club, she pursued projects to preserve Baguio's natural beauty.

"I've been fighting for the city for 15 years on a crusade to safeguard Baguio's ambiance and allure," she says.

The proposed flyover stretching over the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center rotunda, she says, will "uglify" Baguio, one of the top tourist destinations in the country.

She is puzzled why the Department of Public Works and Highways insists on a project that many people are opposing.

Should the construction pushes through, the felled trees, disrupted aquifer and pollution would deteriorate Baguio further, she says.

"I will still work [to protect Baguio] until I cannot breathe anymore," said San Agustin.

The public servant

De Guia, Baguio's first woman councilor and acting mayor, now leads a quiet life at 90. Yet her role as a public servant has not ended.

"Baguio was a dream city created, formed and planned by the Americans," she says.

But she says like her old photographs, good governance is stuck in time.

De Guia comes from a prominent family in the city. She says she is a natural environmentalist since her father was among the pioneer foresters in the country.

After graduating from the University of the Philippines with a degree in philosophy, De Guia took up law and earned her degree in 1940.

She returned to Baguio and found herself running for office that same year.

"I don't regret taking up law because it was fun and I learned a lot," De Guia says.

Knowledge of the law, she says, helped her make Baguio a well-administered city during her term. "Baguio had a good government, [it was] a very disciplined city," she says.

But politicking and lax law enforcement have deteriorated Baguio, once a model city in the country.

She blames politicians for pushing through with unnecessary projects such as the proposed flyover.

"We are in favor of development, but development must have direction," De Guia says. The project, she believes, may end up unfinished due to lack of funds.

The writer

Afable's house is a museum in its own right. Decorating it are Sung Dynasty jars and one of National Artist Benedicto Cabrera's early paintings. But its most prized possession is still its owner, a small woman bound to big responsibilities.

"When they ask me what organization I belong to, I say I only belong to one, 'Cecile Afable,'" she says.

Afable, 83, is editor in chief of the Baguio Midland Courier, the oldest community newspaper in the city.

Though her four children, now all professionals, chose to settle elsewhere, Afable is happy to stay in Baguio. She adores the blue sky and open space.

But like San Agustin and De Guia, Afable thinks that Baguio has changed for the worse. "There are too many houses, more than enough to be supported by the water system," she says.

Among the causes she is advocating are the regreening and the protection of the water system of the city. But what occupies most of her time now is opposing another flyover in Baguio.

Issues

These women believe that people who do not care about Baguio have not experienced it the way they have.

"We're fighting because we experienced the beauty, ambiance and good life of Baguio," says San Agustin.

They say the flyover will ruin Baguio's small town appeal and result in the cutting of century-old trees.

"The city does not have the funding. The Commission on Audit now will not give certification that the money is there," says Afable.

Afable said if traffic at the BGHMC rotunda was the problem, a traffic light would be the cheaper and more environment-friendly solution.

San Agustin, De Guia and Afable agree that apathy is their worst enemy.

"If you don't demonstrate against [the flyover], nothing will happen," says Afable.

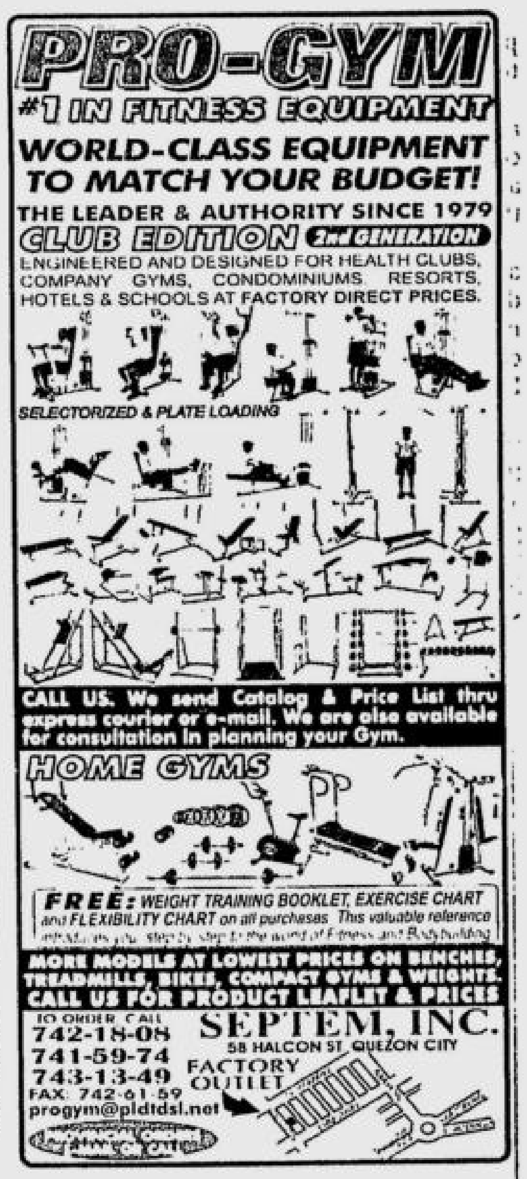
"The worst crime is not doing anything," San Agustin says.

But the DPWH is determined to push the project despite the opposition of some sectors.

Mariano Alquiza, DPWH regional director, says he is planning to issue another suspension order on the project following the agency's failure to obtain a permit to cut trees from the city government.

"We are studying the possibility of going directly to the DENR [for the permit]," he says.

Mayor Braulio Yaranon has opposed the flyover and says he will not issue the permit to cut trees for the project.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So you want to drink 'tapuy' in Ambaguio? Think again

By Ben Moses Ebreo
Ambaguio, Nueva Vizcaya

VISITORS SPENDING THEIR VAcation in the upland town of Ambaguio (pop: 9,750) in Nueva Vizcaya will be surprised to know that buying intoxicating drinks, including the native rice wine "*tapuy*," and drinking with friends and relatives are not as easy as in the lowlands.

For the past years, Ambaguio (whose name was coined from "*ambagiw*" or moss), which is mostly inhabited by the Kalanguya tribe members, is one of the proud makers and users of native rice wine, along with the towns of Kayapa, Kasibu and Sta. Fe.

'[D]rinking in most villages has resulted in various domestic problems that tend to destroy the harmonious relationship among Kalanguya families'

"I used to go to Ambaguio and drink *tapuy* with my friends with ease. Not anymore; we were even stoned," said Rudie Bueno, a former schoolteacher and friend of the Kalanguya's in town.

He was surprised to know later that his visit to Agustin Bugtong, village chief of Salingsingan, resulted in the filing of a complaint against the official, who acted as his host during a village fiesta.

Bueno said he, Bugtong and some friends drank rice wine during that visit and this prompted the complaint. Bugtong was charged with violating Municipal Ordinance No. 127, which prohibits the selling and drinking of liquor, wine and other intoxicating drinks by the local women's organization.

Councilor Juliet Samonte, chair of the municipal council's committee on infrastructure, social welfare and health, said the ordinance was approved in November last year as a response to the increasing number of drunk villagers which has affected the town's peace and order situation.

ANCIENT WINE. Indigenous peoples of the Cordillera, like this elder from Ifugao, have been producing "tapuy" (rice wine) for centuries. EV ESPIRITU

"We have noted an increasing number of our villagers wasting their time drinking instead of being with their families. Even students are drawn to this vice, spending more [time] drinking than studying," Samonte said.

She said drinking in most villages had resulted in various domestic problems that tend to destroy the harmonious relationship among Kalanguya families.

The ordinance, which was proposed three years ago, is also supported by women's organizations in other villages, Samonte said.

"In fact, they are now active as our partners in the implementation of this ordinance," she said.

Local officials have expressed relief that with the ordinance, their efforts could now be focused on other development projects, instead of resolving drinking-related incidents.

Cultural practice

The ordinance does not go against the production of *tapuy* as part of the cultural practice among the Kalanguya, Samonte said.

Rice wine drinking is allowed during tribal festivities, like weddings, rituals, clan reunions and town festivals, provided permits are issued by the mayor or barangay officials, she said.

The allowable volume of drinks will be limited, based on the capacity of visitors and guests, she added. Local officials are held liable for untoward incidents.

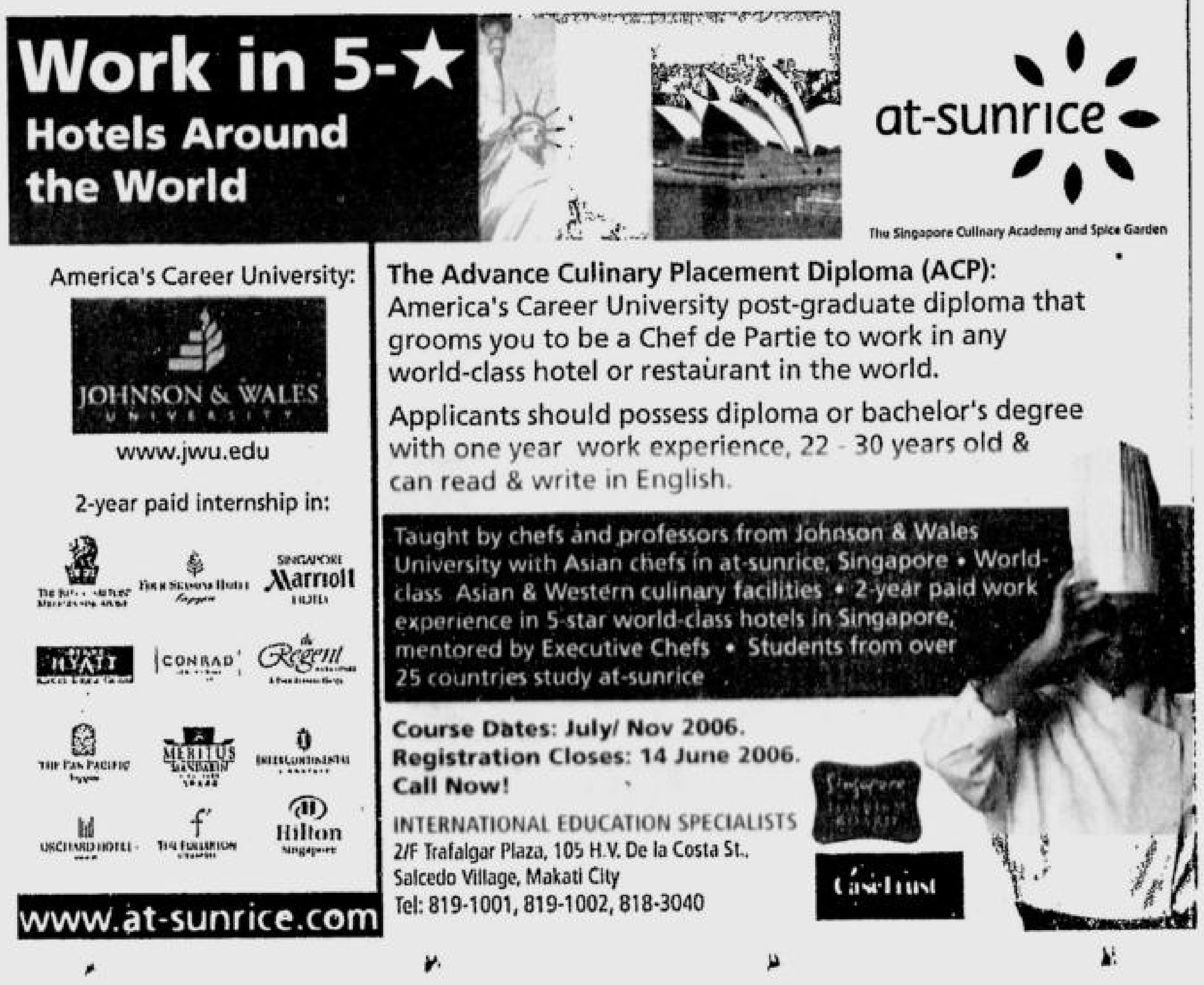
Since Ambaguio's villages are far from one another, Mayor Nuepe Manuel has deputized village chiefs to issue permits to merrymakers and festival hosts. They also act as "regulators" to ensure that no untoward incident happens.

Offenders, which may include host families and stores or people who sold the intoxicating drinks, are fined P500 for the first offense; P1,500, second offense; P2,500, third offense; and confiscation of business permits for continuous offenses.

But Mauricio Bandao, 46, village chief of Tiblac, has questioned the ordinance as a regulatory and prohibitory measure.

The law, in its entirety, has regulatory provisions, but one of them has become the subject of discussion because of its discriminatory effect on people's integrity and image, especially men, he said.

Legal experts, who spoke during a recent seminar on the barangay justice system, suggested that the ban on drinking should have the consensus of Ambaguio voters, he said.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'Gutsy educator' wanted at DepEd

A MILITANT STUDENT GROUP HAS CALLED ON MALACAÑANG TO appoint a "gutsy educator" as permanent head of the Department of Education, saying the long delay in the appointment of a secretary has serious repercussions for the country's education system.

"The lack of a permanent DepEd secretary can be a hindrance to the agency's long-term plans," said Kabataan Party vice president Carl Marc Ramota.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered the military to build makeshift classrooms to ease an acute shortage.

"Education is a flagship concern of this administration," the President said in a statement.

"We will not stop until we can deliver all available resources to build more classrooms led by competent teachers, and with better books, facilities and modern tools of learning," she said.

On Monday, as 20 million students began the school year, Ms Arroyo acknowledged that there were "perennial problems" in the education system.

Many children were crammed into gymnasiums, open spaces and even toilets on the first day of classes, reports said.

Noting that it has been almost a year since Florencio Abad resigned as DepEd chief, Ramota said the delay "only [showed] Arroyo's regard for education and her government's insincerity to promote quality education and competitiveness for young Filipinos."

"The way she has handled this issue and how she has treated DepEd officer in charge (OIC) Fe Hidalgo and former Undersecretary Miguel Luz show how Arroyo acts toward officials who differ with her position and how she regards education," Ramota said.

He said that the new education chief must be a "gutsy educator" that would push for a higher education budget and must be willing to review "ambiguous policies." *Alcuin Papa and AFP*

What your cellphone says about your personality

by Grace Shangkuan Koo, Ph. D.

Some like it hot; some like it icy. Some like both. Flashy mobiles or nondescript two-featured models? Are cellphones still considered status symbols? Certainly not for newspaper vendors in Hong Kong! Some users are talkative; while others simply reply with a forlorn "k". My ringing tone is a Chopin etude; my husband's, the traditional "krr-ring!" For the neurotic, everything is an emergency; while the lethargic feel everything can wait. The sentimental fellows find everything picture-worthy; the self-conscious ones refuse to be caught on camera. Some delete the messages as soon as they are received; others keep them in the inbox to reminisce. While some settle for basic phone functions, others, especially the younger ones go for cutting edge technology.

With Globe Gizmo Prepaid, kids are spared this dilemma through special features tailor-fit for youngsters aged seven to twelve, like the exclusive Gizmobits trivia service and other learning tools.

Cellphones have made it easier for people to keep in touch with each other. For busy working parents, it's a convenient way of monitoring their kids. Especially with Globe Gizmo's Emergency Text and Low Load Alert – these child-friendly services ensure constant communication between parent and child. Frequent cellphone use made "txt spelng" popular as well. Poor spellers have found the best ally and alibi for wrong spelling. Grammarians, on the other hand, can't stand the warped language – kids won't find this a problem, with Globe Gizmo's Dictionary and Thesaurus functions.

Whether you're a kid or a grownup don't forget proper phone etiquette. Keep your phone switched off or on silent mode while at the movies or attending important functions. Courtesy is always appreciated. A simple greeting at the start of every message can brighten anyone's day. Talking loudly on the phone is a no-no! Remember that there are other people in the room, and you might be disturbing them as well. Practice proper phone habits so your children turn to be responsible cellphone users.

An exemplary teacher, voracious reader, and classical music advocate, Dr. Grace Koo shared her parenting and education expertise with the Gizmo Advisory Board (GAB), an advocacy group promoting responsible mobile connectivity for the youth. Convened by Globe Gizmo Prepaid – the country's first prepaid mobile service for kids – GAB has worked with the brand in developing interactive learning experiences and appropriate connectivity options for youngsters aged seven to twelve.

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One of the GAB's flagship projects was the development of Gizmobits, a FREE educational service offering daily fun facts in four different areas. MYMIND has study tips and helpful facts from science and other subjects; MYWORLD introduces kids to diverse sights and traditions here and abroad; MYCONNECTIONS teaches kids how to connect with themselves, with others, and with God; while MYBODY is all about proper hygiene, nutrition, and fitness. Your child can avail of this free service if they are using a Globe Gizmo SIM. Your child just needs to text GIZMOBITS to 2811 to access the educational tips mentioned above.

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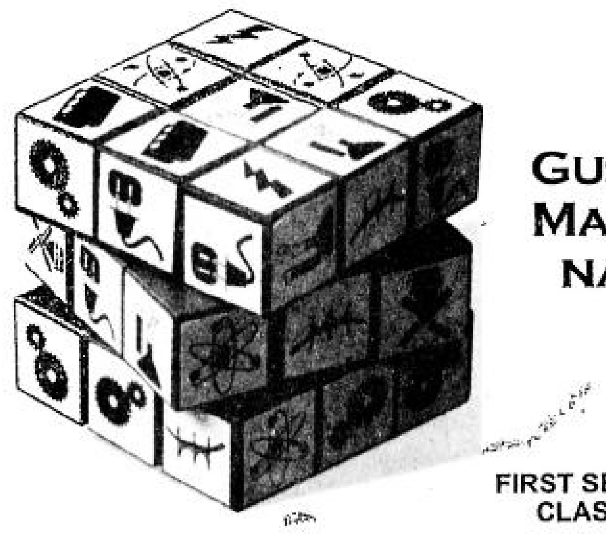

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THE IMPACT shattered glass panels at the ground floor of the Grepalife building.
ERIK ARAZAS

A MAKATI SWAT team member goes over the site of the bombing.
MAHAR[illegible] MIRASOL/CONTRIBU[illegible]

Blast rocks Makati building

Planholders, firm feud eyed

By Luige A. del Puerto, Tarra V. Quismundo and Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A BOMB WENT OFF IN FRONT OF THE Great Pacific Life Assurance Corp. (Grepalife) building on Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City, at around 2:50 a.m. yesterday.

No one was hurt in the incident although the blast shattered glass panels on the first floor where the office of Lifetime Plans, a division of pre-need firm Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI), is located.

"Right now, it's premature to point to any group as responsible for the attack but one angle being looked into is the rift between Pacific and its planholders," said Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao Jr., the spokesperson of the Philippine National Police.

"That's the strongest angle so far," he said, adding that the Yuchengcos, owner of the insurance firm, were fully cooperating with police investigators.

PPI planholders have been pursuing claims with the firm. The PPI, on the other hand, had sought remedy from the court, saying it was unable to pay the claims because of tuition increases. A group at the forefront of the fight, the Parents Enabling Parents (PEP) Coalition, subsequently sued the Yuchengco-owned PPI because of unpaid plans. In turn, PPI sued for libel some of the PEP leaders.

PEP Coalition president Philip Piccio, however, denied that the group was behind the bombing. "They can quickly point to planholders but we can also say that the blast may have come from them to gain sympathy, of which they have none anymore. It's easy to guess who I'm referring to," Piccio said.

He added: "There are limits to actions we can do and we do not countenance such things. that's why we went to the courts."

Business as usual

PPI spokesperson Felix Desiderio, meanwhile, said it was business at usual. "We believe that the bombing is merely part of an orchestrated attack against PPI to scare us and prevent us from defending ourselves and availing of the remedies available under the law," Desiderio added.

Officials from the Makati Police Special Weapons and Tactics and the PNP Bomb Data Center said the improvised explosive device (IED) was a pillbox, based on the remnants of the bomb recovered from the scene.

Pagdilao said it was unlikely that terrorists were behind the attack because of the type of explosive used and the manner in which the attack was carried out.

Justice

SPD director Wilfredo Garcia, meanwhile, had another theory. "Maybe, a rightist or leftist group is trying to exact justice for planholders," he said.

Makati police chief, Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio, had the same view. "Maybe supporters of the planholders or people who feel like they have been too oppressed had connections with leftist or rightist groups and told them about their grievances," Valerio said.

At the same time, he downplayed the claim made by a group called Kawal at Taong Bayan that they were behind the incident. "I haven't heard of this group. Maybe they are just taking advantage of the situation," said Valerio.

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Stopping for gas was unwise move for 3 robbery suspects

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THREE SUSPECTED ROBBERS WERE arrested at around 2 a.m. yesterday after two of their victims recognized the suspects' vehicle at a gasoline station on the corner of Gil Puyat and Chino Roces Avenues in Makati City.

The three—believed to be members of the notorious robbery gang "Midnight Bandits"—were identified as Marko Villavicencio, Ramon Carlo Manila and a 17-year-old boy.

"They were noticed by those they had victimized in the past days. They were identified and arrested by a mobile patrol," said Makati police chief, Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio.

The suspects were on board a green 1996 model green Toyota Corolla (UMJ 266) which had a media card on the windshield and a Department of Interior and Local Government plate attached to the rear when they were spotted by Jonas Ricardo and Frederick Villasis.

The two had been robbed over the weekend by several men on board a vehicle that looked like the one they spotted at the gas station

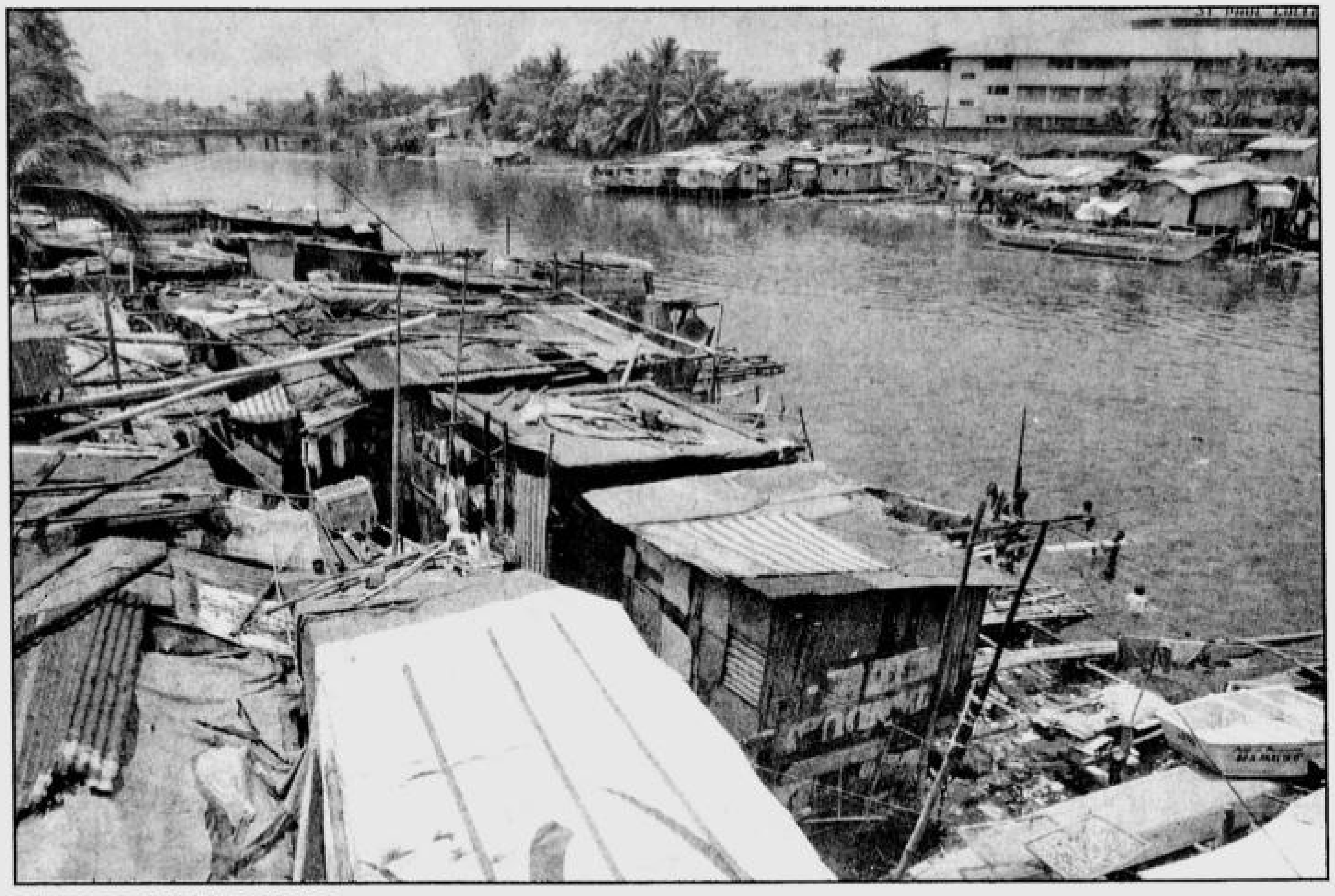
They immediately alerted police officers, who in turn confirmed that the vehicle was being sought by authorities. Police then arrested the suspects who yielded a .38 cal. revolver and a fake M-16 from their vehicle.

Valerio said several wallets, likely belonging to the gang's victims, were also found inside the vehicle.

"They have been under surveillance for a week. We have responded to a report of this vehicle being involved in robbery but they got away. They have been operating here for more than a month," said the police chief.

Valerio said the alleged robbery gang, which usually operated with five members on board their car, would go around the city at night, looking for victims.

The suspects face robbery charges based on the complaint of the two men. The police were waiting for the gang's other victims to file a complaint against them.



LIVING DANGEROUSLY
Shanties of informal settlers dot the riverbanks in Barangay Don Galo, Parañaque City. Residents, however, are living on the edge as the onset of the rainy season may lead to floods which could wash away their houses. ROMY HOMILLADA

Pasig mayor vows to stop entry of STL in city

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

SAYING PASIG CITY WAS ALREADY wealthy, Mayor Vicente Eusebio yesterday announced he would block any attempt to establish the administration-endorsed Small Time Lottery (STL) in the city.

"I will not allow any form of gambling in Pasig City," Eusebio, a staunch supporter of President Macapagal-Arroyo, told the INQUIRER.

He made the announcement after he was approached by several lobbyists proposing the establishment of an STL outlet in the city.

"I am making this announcement so these lobbyists will know that I will not allow it in the city," Eusebio added.

The national government came up with the STL, now being ran by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., to stamp out the illegal numbers game popularly known as jueteng.

Some mayors in the metropolis, however, such as Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, have opposed STL operations in their areas. San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito had also announced earlier that he would not allow STL operations in his town, an opposition bailiwick.

"Our city has achieved economic supremacy with the help of legitimate investors and its industrious people," Eusebio said.

"The STL, jueteng and other forms of gambling (have) nothing to do with our present financial status," the mayor added.

He also ordered the City Business Permits and Licensing Office to disapprove permits for casino, bingo gaming or Internet gambling.

In the statement, Eusebio asked city residents to also quickly report to authorities any illegal gambling activity in their areas.

Still no classes at Taguig high; principal hangs on

By Jocelyn R. Uy

CLASSES REMAIN SUSPENDED AT THE Taguig National High School as watchmen turned away students who showed up yesterday morning, reportedly upon the orders of school principal Dr. Eleonor (not Eleanor as earlier reported) Abisado.

Classes were called off on Monday after some 100 teachers, students and some parents staged a rally calling for Abisado's ouster on charges of corruption.

Yesterday, Department of Education (DepEd) Undersecretary Franklin Sunga went to Abisado's office to inform her about her reassignment to another school. But Abisado told the INQUIRER that she was determined to stay put at her post. "Undersecretary Sunga came here to inform me that I would be reassigned to another school. But I resisted," Abisado said. She added that DepEd officials should be punishing the teachers who held a rally on Monday because they supposedly violated DepEd Secretary Fe Hidalgo's directive against teachers holding protest actions.

Abisado had reset the opening of classes to Tuesday next week after Monday's rally. They also claimed she lacked school management skills, had misappropriated school funds and was not concerned about the teachers' welfare.

But Abisado had dismissed the allegations as "baseless" and "politically motivated," adding that Mayor Freddie Tinga could have something to do with the demand for her ouster. This, however, was denied by Ana Santos, Taguig public information office head. "The protesters were teachers and parents airing their grievances," she said.

LLDA okays reopening of snack factory in Caloocan

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A FACTORY WHICH WAS SHUT DOWN IN APRIL by the Laguna Lake Development Authority has been allowed to reopen after complying with antipollution requirements set by the government agency.

LLDA General Manager Casimiro A. Ynares III signed the three-page order dated May 17 lifting the cease-and-desist order (CDO) issued against KSK Food Products, manufacturer of the cornsnack brand Boy Bawang.

The factory in Caloocan City, was allowed to resume operations after management undertook remedial measures, including the construction of a wastewater treatment facility (WTF) set for completion on Aug. 31. KSK Food also implemented an antipollution program in which wastewater produced by the factory would be directed to a collecting pit, sprayed with enzymes and then passed through a solid-liquid separator before its released, free of pollutants, into a nearby creek.

The LLDA, however, gave the firm until Aug. 31 to finish the construction of its WTF, apart from requiring the firm to submit a monthly report on the project's status. "Otherwise, the CDO previously issued shall again be reinforced and will remain until the complete construction of its WTF," it warned.

Requirements

Narciso Mallari, KSK Food spokesperson, meanwhile, said they were committed to complying with the requirements set by the government agency. "Civil and mechanical works for the construction of the WTF are being done round the clock to enable us to meet the deadline set by LLDA," he told the INQUIRER.

The LLDA had issued a CDO to KSK Food on April 18 after its equipment and facilities at 949 Llano Road, Bignay, Caloocan City, were found to be a source of water pollution. The order was implemented on April 26.

The firm, however, filed a motion for the issuance of a temporary lifting order (TLO) the following day. The CDO was lifted on April 27 after the firm met the requirements for the issuance of a TLO but the LLDA decided to reinforce the CDO after finding some violations on the part of KSK Food. After complying with the LLDA's requirements, the government agency decided to lift the CDO against the company on May 17.

METROBRIEFS

Help desks in schools

IF you cannot go to the police, the police will come to you. Manila Police District (MPD) director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong yesterday reminded elementary and high school students in the city that they need not proceed to police stations to report criminal incidents. Bulaong said the students just have to voice out their concerns at the school's designated student assistance desks. "The commanders of police community precincts near the schools are responsible for collecting and immediately acting on the reports," the MPD official said in an interview. The desks, usually managed by the school's guidance counselors and security officers, were formed after the reactivation of the School Campus Security Committee last week.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Struck by lightning

THE FIRST day of school turned out to be the last for a 15-year-old girl. Gelene Vitto, a 4th year student of the Muntinlupa National High School, was killed after lightning struck her on Monday afternoon. Vitto and a classmate, Vanessa Veron, had sought shelter from a light drizzle under a narra tree on the school grounds after their classes ended at 12:45 p.m., said Editha Valdez, officer-in-charge of the school. Valdez said a school employee, who was eating lunch in the principal's office which was overlooking the narra tree, saw the two sit on one of the benches under the tree. The staff also saw Vitto using her cellular phone. "Suddenly she heard an explosion. Then she saw the two girls already sprawled on the ground," she said. Vitto was rushed to the Muntinlupa Medical Center where she was declared dead on arrival. Veron, as of press time, was still confined at the hospital for "mild trauma."

Jocelyn R. Uy

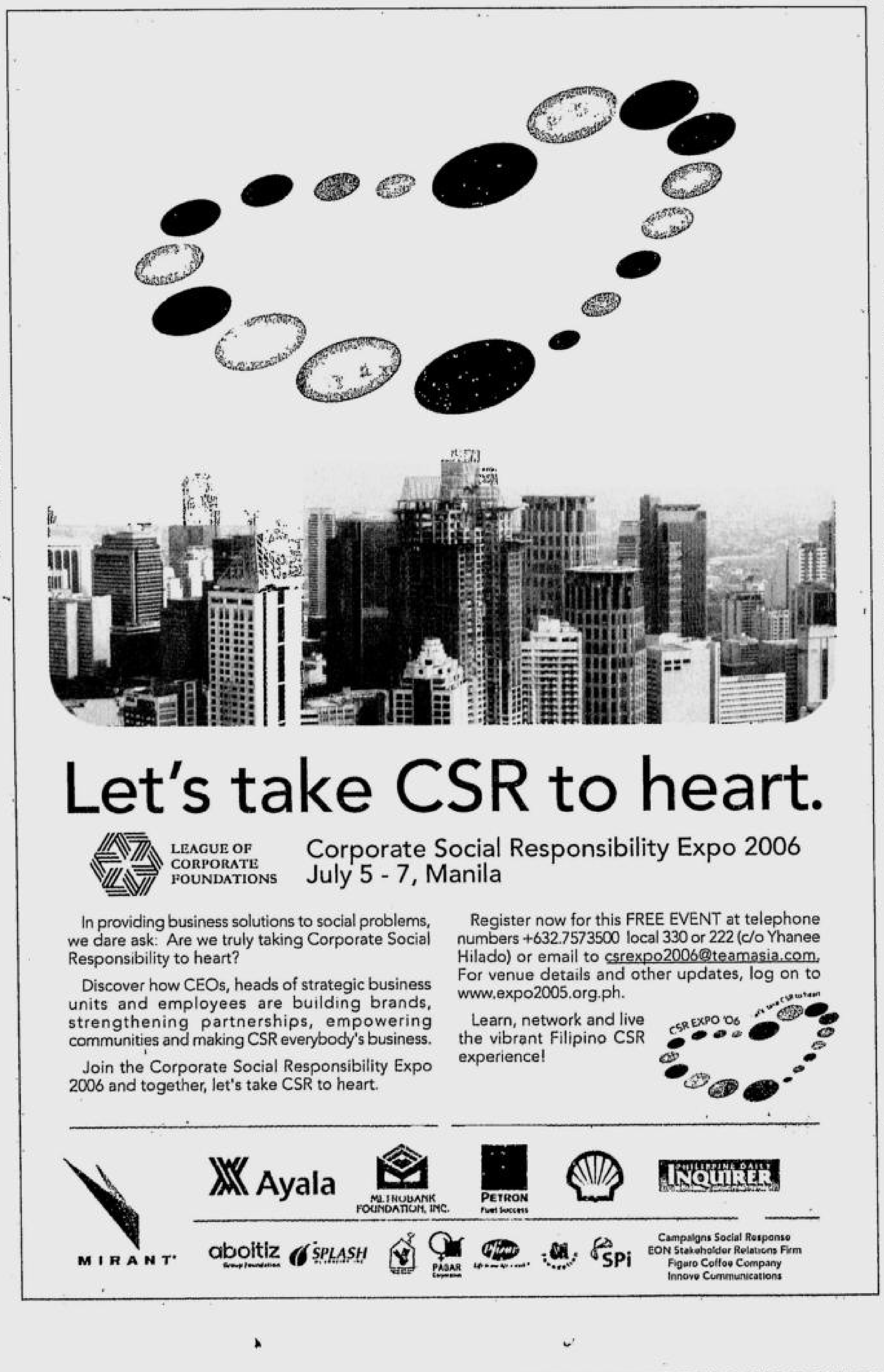
Art exhibit at Paulo's

PAULO'S, a new restaurant complex on Kalayaan Avenue (behind Quezon City Hall) will have a soft launch on June 8 at 6 p.m., featuring an exhibit of the recent works of various artists, including Francisco Verano, Adi Baens Santos, Leonilo Doloricon, Dante Perez, Jessie Alfonso, Entes Magpusao, Ernie Patricio and Bing Siochi. The artworks are for sale at below-gallery prices. The subjects range from decorative landscapes and flowers to historical landmarks, nudes and abstracts. "Dining at Paulo's should provide a better appreciation of Filipino culture, both in fine cuisine and in the fine arts," said owner Dr. Richard Llorca.

Slay suspects nabbed

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation yesterday announced the arrest of two Chinese nationals allegedly behind the death of a casino financier late last year. NBI acting director Nestor Mantaring said suspects Lee Wei Jiang or Anthony Lee and Yun Yao Feng were arrested by public security officers in mainland China on May 16 and May 17, respectively. In a report to the NBI, Supt. Liu Lujun of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China said Lee was nabbed in Shishi City, Fujian Province while Yun was arrested in Huai Nan City, Anhui Province. Three other suspects, Hua Hong or Xiao Feng, Huang Cheng De or Oti, William Co, remain at large. A sixth suspect, Allan Mendoza, was arrested shortly after victim Shi Bun Tok or Emerson Sy was found dead on Diosdado Macapagal Avenue in Pasay City on Dec. 1, 2005.

Margaux C. Ortiz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More terror suspects face arrest in Canada

OTTAWA—MORE ARRESTS WERE EXPECTED following the detention of 17 people over an alleged al-Qaida-inspired plot to bomb high profile targets in Canada, a top police official said Monday.

Amid media reports that the Canadian parliament was on the group's hitlist, Mike McDonell, assistant commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), said: "This investigation is not finished." "We will be following every investigative lead we have to its conclusion and anybody that aided, facilitated, or participated in this terrorist event will be arrested and brought to the courts," McDonell told CBC public television.

Twelve men and five youths detained in Ontario province on Friday and Saturday would appear in court Tuesday to face charges over an alleged plan to stage a series of spectacular bomb attacks, officials said.

Police have refused to say what the targets were.

But media reports suggested the group had videotaped the CN Tower in Toronto, one of the world's tallest structures, and planned to hit Canada's parliament in Ottawa and intelligence service offices in Toronto, as well as the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The group had acquired three tons of ammonium nitrate, a fertilizer ingredient that can be mixed with fuel to create explosive devices, police said.

The amount is three times what was used in the 1995 bombing of a US federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, that killed 168 people.

"It was their intent to use it for a terrorist attack," McDonell said. But police raids on what media said were a dozen locations prevented them from assembling bombs, he said.

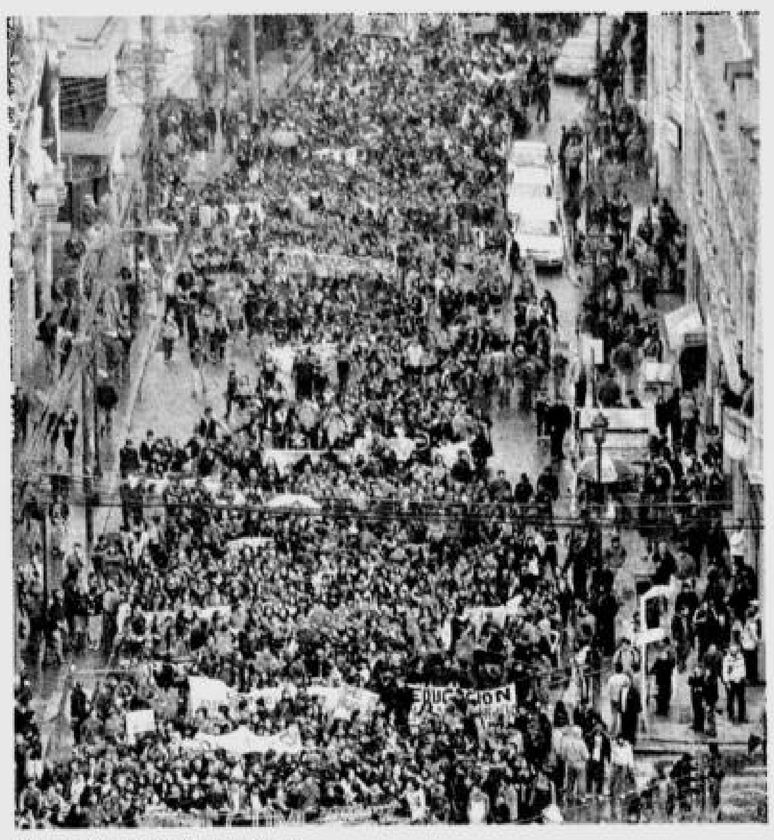
"This group posed a real and serious threat. It had the capacity and intent to carry out these acts," he noted.

Media reports said the group was detained in a sting operation after the RCMP itself delivered the fertilizer just before the raids.

Toronto police chief Bill Blair said the accused were not motivated by their Muslim faith, seeking to allay fears of an anti-Muslim backlash after vandals broke windows at a mosque late Saturday.

But some local Muslim community representatives said the charges would be proved false. "This is an attack on the Muslim community," Aly Hindy, an imam, had told reporters Saturday.

Some community representatives questioned the timing of the arrests, less than a week after Jack Hooper, deputy director of operations at Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), warned Canada faced a growing threat from "homegrown terrorists," particularly youth upset about the oppression of Muslims worldwide and Canada's combat role in Afghanistan. *AFP*



STUDENT PROTEST
THOUSANDS of Chilean students march during a massive protest rally June 5 along the streets of Valparaiso, to demand education reforms. AFP

WORLDBRIEFS

Indon quake toll revised

BANTUL, Indonesia—Indonesian authorities on Monday revised down the death toll from the Java earthquake to nearly 5,800, as new aid supplies helped survivors move forward on the long road to recovery. After sending assessment teams to Central Java and Yogyakarta provinces, the social affairs ministry revised down the quake death toll from 6,234 to 5,782. The number of injured also went down to from 46,000 to 33,000. But the ministry dramatically raised the number of people displaced in the crisis, saying more than 343,000 had spent a ninth night in the open, many of them under rudimentary tents made of plastic sheeting and bamboo poles. *AFP*

Iceland's premier quits

REYKJAVIK—The prime minister of Iceland, whose nation has been hit by worries about economic overheating, said on Monday he planned to step down and media reports said the foreign minister would take his place. Prime Minister Halldor Asgrimsson had earlier told local media he would take responsibility for the poor performance of his Progressive Party in local elections on May 27. "Halldor Asgrimsson has said that he will end his involvement in politics," a government spokesperson told Reuters, referring to comments the prime minister made to Icelandic media. He gave no more details. *Reuters*

Bomb blast rocks Sri Lanka

COLOMBO—A powerful bomb exploded outside a navy base near the Sri Lankan capital Colombo Tuesday, seriously wounding at least one man, military officials said. The bomb, believed to be a Claymore mine, went off as a bus pulled up outside the Welisara navy camp, a military official said, adding that the driver of the vehicle was critically wounded. There was no claim of responsibility, but similar attacks have been blamed on Tamil rebels. No other details were immediately available. *AFP*

Iraqi gets life for kidnapping

BAGHDAD—A Baghdad court sentenced an Iraqi man to life in prison on Monday in connection with the 2004 abduction and killing of an Iraqi-British aid worker. A court official said that Mustafa Salman had been convicted on what appeared to be charges of aiding and abetting aid worker Margaret Hassan's killers. Two other defendants were freed. Salman was sentenced a few hours after the start of the trial, believed to be one of the first known trials for the abduction or killing of a foreign-born civilian in Iraq. *Reuters*

New Peru leader's challenges

LIMA—Alan Garcia, Peru's new president-elect, pledges to do what few Latin American leaders have achieved: seduce Wall Street with prudent policies and simultaneously lift millions out of poverty. Hundreds of thousands of people danced in the streets on Sunday night shouting: "He's going to give us a better life," ecstatic at the prospect of Garcia's promises of loans, schools, drinking water and cheap gasoline. But making good on ambitious promises of 7 percent annual economic growth, a fiscal deficit of 1 percent of gross domestic product and cutting both illiteracy rates and soaring domestic fuel prices could be too much for Garcia. *Reuters*

Gunmen snatch 50 in Baghdad, 11 students gunned down

BAGHDAD—GUNMEN IN COMMANDO UNIFORMS snatched at least 50 people from travel agencies in central Baghdad on Monday in an apparent kidnapping, as 11 students were shot dead elsewhere in the Iraqi capital.

The commander of the police commandos in Baghdad, Maj. Gen. Rashid Fulayah, contradicted earlier reports that the operation was officially sanctioned.

"The ministry of interior has nothing to do with this arrest and especially not the commando forces and the forces of public order brigades who are not authorized to do such operations," Fulayah told AFP.

Two Syrians were among those taken away.

"They took people away randomly," said one store owner on Salhiya street, convinced it was criminal elements. "They grabbed a father and his two children but left the mother on the street shouting." Witnesses described how two vehicles painted with the distinctive camouflage pattern of the commandos, accompanied by another 10 unmarked pick-up trucks, blocked off the street and began taking people away.

"If they were the government, they would have investigated and asked who the people they took were," said another witness who preferred to remain anonymous.

Unattended small trucks for hauling goods lined the street after their drivers had been taken away.

The raid took about 10 minutes and the police who came to investigate claimed no knowledge of the operation.

The confusion over whether the raid was officially sanctioned or a criminal operation is a reflection of the widespread suspicion people in Baghdad have of security forces, some of whom are believed to be infiltrated by militias.

A number of other violent operations have been carried out by gunmen in uniforms, which can be easily purchased in the city's markets. *AFP*

Bush pushes ban on gay marriage

WASHINGTON—US PRESIDENT George W. Bush on Monday pushed for a national ban on homosexual marriage, an election-year effort on an issue dear to his conservative Republican base but unlikely to become law.

With just five months before November legislative elections that are expected to be dominated by issues like the war in Iraq, Bush called for a constitutional amendment defining marriage as solely between a man and a woman.

"I call on the Congress to pass this amendment, send it to the states for ratification so we can take this issue out of the hands of over-reaching judges and put it back where it belongs—in the hands of the American people," he said.

Bush again targeted what he called "activist judges" who have struck down laws restricting marriage to a union between a man and a woman in the states of Washington, California, Maryland, New York and Nebraska.

"It's an important issue for our country to debate and to resolve. And the best way to resolve this issue is through a constitutional amendment, which I strongly support," said the president.

A constitutional amendment is unlikely because it must garner two-thirds majorities in the Senate and House of Representatives—Bush's Republicans lack the votes—and then win passage from three-fourths of the 50 US states.

But with Bush's approval ratings at dismal levels, experts say Republicans need to muster as many of their conservative faithful as possible to prevent heavy losses in the US Congress. *AFP*

Abbas to call referendum after talks fail

RAMALLAH—PALESTINIAN leader Mahmud Abbas was set Tuesday to call a referendum on a statehood plan which implicitly recognizes Israel after a deadline passed for a policy agreement between the Hamas-led government and his Fatah faction.

"The president will fix the date for holding this referendum on Tuesday," his office said in a statement, following the failure of last-minute talks late Monday between Palestinian factions in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

Hamas, meanwhile, called for more negotiations even as a midnight deadline set by Abbas passed after 10 days of dialogue. But the Palestinian Authority president was reported to have ruled out any extension. Abbas had set the deadline for Hamas, which routed Fatah in January elections and formed a government, to soften its policy.

The Islamists have defied enormous pressure to accept an initiative drawn up by jailed faction leaders that has been the centerpiece of the cross-party talks. *AFP*

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The DILG through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites service contractors to apply for eligibility and to Bid for the hereunder project:

NAME OF PROJECT	Provision of Janitorial and Sanitation Services for the Calendar Year 2006 for the Department of the Interior and Local Government located at A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, EDSA corner Mapagmahal Street, Diliman, Quezon City
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 3,500,000.00
Contract Duration	August 1 – December 31, 2006

Prospective bidders should have experience in a similar undertaking for at least five years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the prosecution of the project. The Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

Criteria for the eligibility check of the prospective bidders, examination and evaluation of bids and post-qualification and all matters relevant to this procurement shall be in accordance with Republic Act No. 9184 (The Government Procurement Reform Act) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

Issuance of Bid Documents	- June 1 - 14, 2006
Pre-Bid Conference	- June 23, 2006
Submission/Opening/Evaluation of Bids	- June 28, 2006
Post qualification	- July 3-17, 2006
Notice of Award	- July 21, 2006

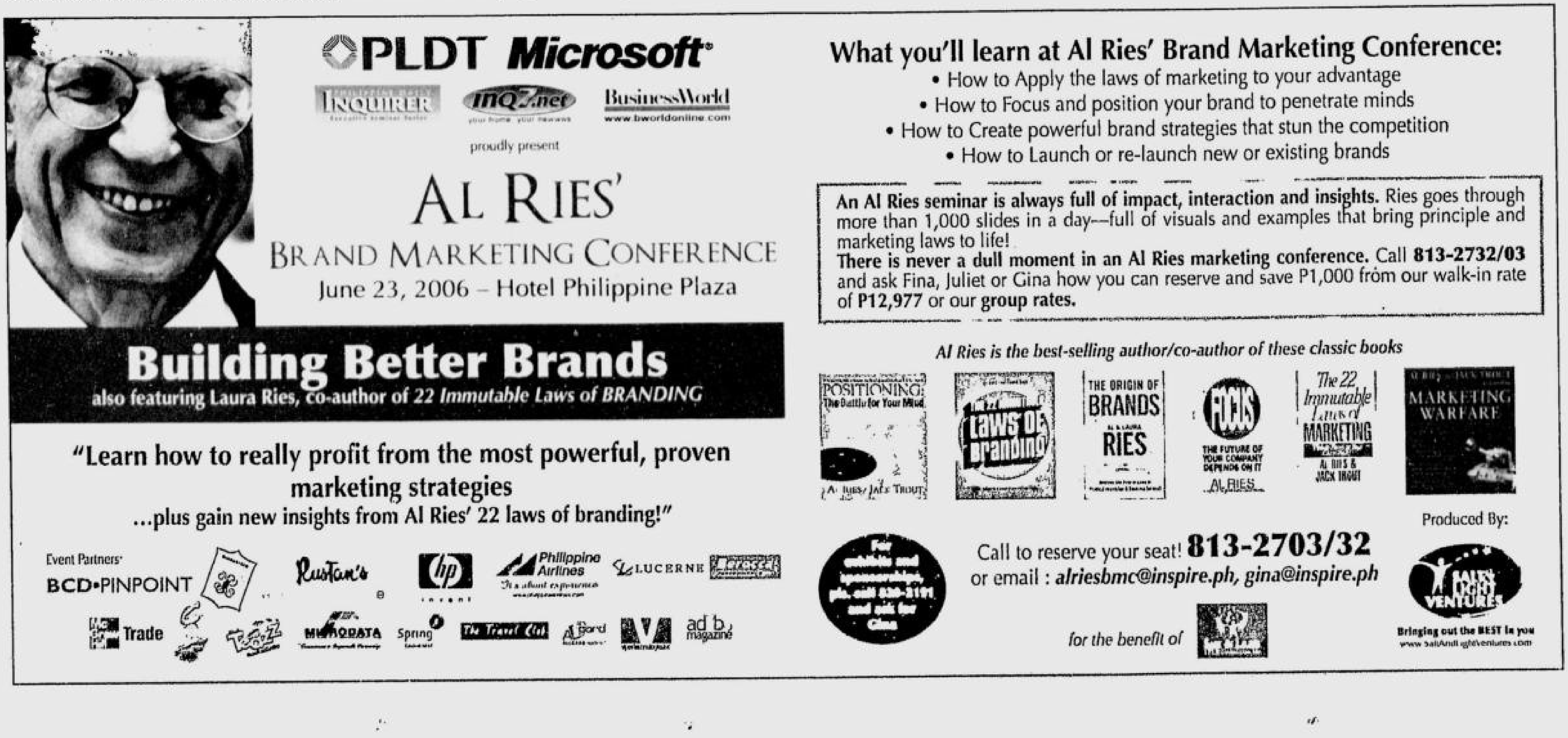
Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Three Thousand Five Hundred Pesos **(Php 3, 500.00)** only to the DILG Cashier.

The complete set of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents may be obtained at the Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) – Secretariat c/o Mr. Reynaldo Bungubung, BAC Secretariat Head (Telephone No. 9266256). Eligibility Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals shall be placed in a separate and marked sealed envelope addressed to ASEC AUSTERE A. PANADERO, Bids and Awards Committee, Chairman, c/o BAC-Secretariat and dropped in the bid box located at the OSEC Conference Room, 10th Floor A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, EDSA corner Mapagmahal Street, Diliman, Quezon City. Deadline of Submission and receipt of Eligibility, Technical and Financial requirements shall be on June 28, 2006 at the OSEC Conference Room.

The DILG reserves the right to reject any or all bids or offers which it may consider to be disadvantageous and not beneficial to DILG or waive any defect or informality therein. Further, the DILG assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

AUSTERE A. PANADERO
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–May 31 & June 7, 2006)



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Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

The WORLD

World powers present nuke incentives to Iran

TEHRAN—A SENIOR EU OFFICIAL ON TUESDAY PRESENTED Iran with proposals from six world powers aimed at persuading Tehran to rein in a nuclear program that the West fears will lead to an atomic bomb.

Iran said it would review the proposals delivered in Tehran by European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana to Iranian chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani.

"We spoke for two hours and they gave their proposals. After reviewing it, Iran will give its answer," Larijani told Iranian reporters after meeting Solana. His comments were later relayed to Reuters.

The package of incentives and penalties, agreed by the world powers, aims to defuse a standoff over Iran's nuclear program.

The West accuses Iran of seeking nuclear weapons but Tehran insists its goals are purely for peaceful, civilian use.

The initiative was put together by the three biggest EU states—Britain, France and Germany—and then approved by the United States, China and Russia.

"The proposal we bring along, the one that we carry, we think that will allow us to get engaged in that negotiation based on trust and respect and confidence," Solana told reporters.

Iran has said it would consider the proposals but officials have also said Iran would not give up uranium enrichment, a process that can be used to make fuel for nuclear power stations or, if enriched to a high enough level, material for bombs.

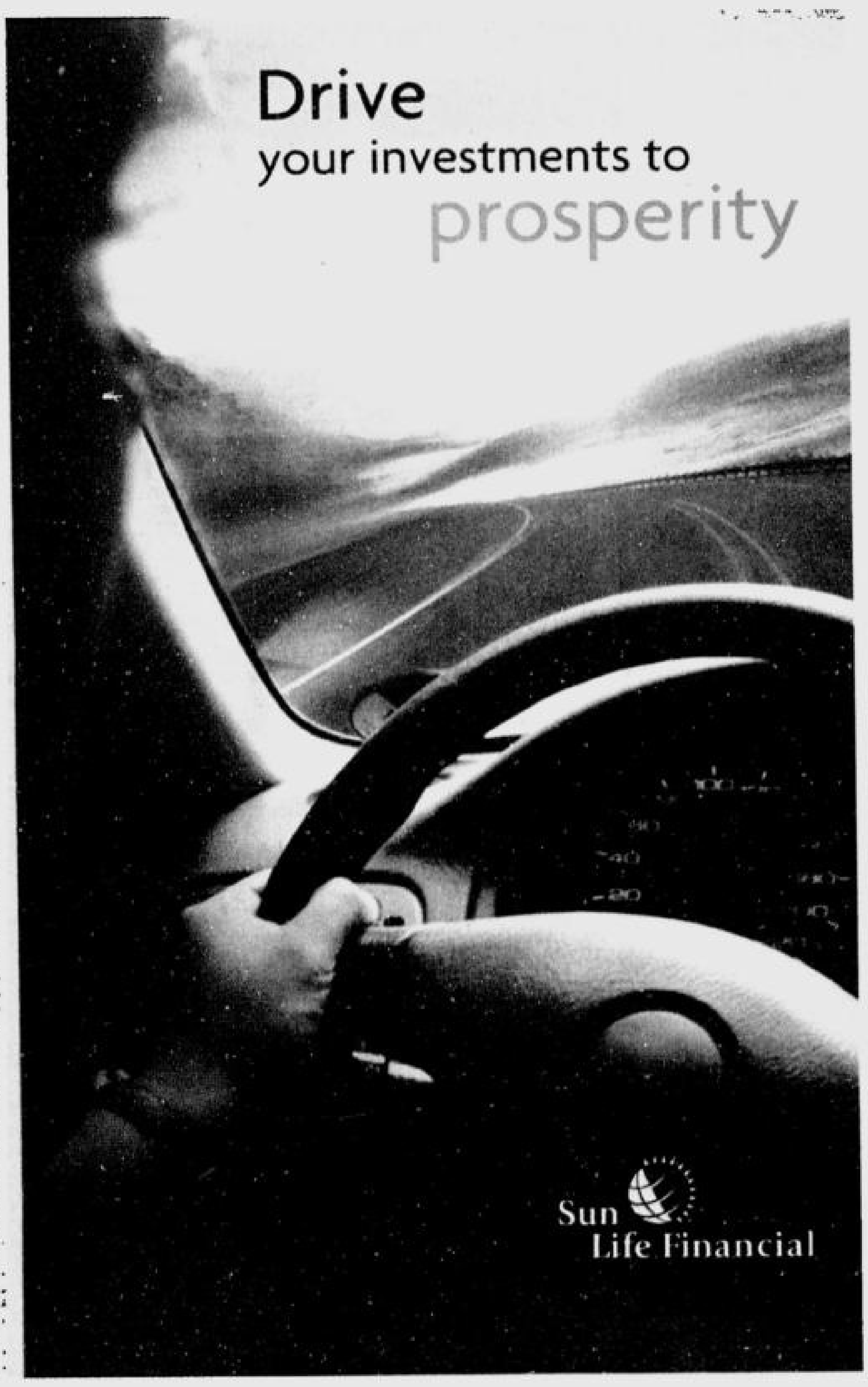
"If their aim is not politicizing the issue, and if they consider our demand, we can reach a logical agreement with them," Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki told reporters shortly before Solana arrived.

The United States has said Iran's negative comments so far are probably part of efforts to stake out a negotiating position and urged careful consideration by the Islamic Republic, with which it broke off diplomatic ties in 1980.

Mottaki said discussions on the package would require "shuttle diplomacy" and Iran would have suggestions to make—indicating no imminent breakthrough.

Details of the proposals have not been announced, but diplomats have been working on themes ranging from offering nuclear reactor technology to giving security guarantees. *Reuters*

COLOR OF THE KING
A Thai woman sells yellow shirts in Bangkok, June 6. Millions of Thais are donning a bright new look by dressing in yellow shirts to honor their beloved king's 60th anniversary on the throne. AFP



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BPI Family Savings Bank Conferred Two Prestigious Awards

BPI Family Savings Bank was recently awarded by the Home Guarantee Corporation (HGC) with two awards: Longtime Partner in Home Financing (Thrift Bank Category) and Biggest Volume of Outstanding Guaranteed Housing Loans (Thrift Bank Category).

Receiving the awards in behalf of BPI Family Savings Bank is BPI EVP Gil Buenaventura. The awards were presented by Vice-President Noli de Castro.

One of the necessities every Filipino should have is shelter. However, the hard times have made it difficult for them to meet everyday needs, much less have their own home. As the country's population continues to increase every year, providing basic needs like food, clothing and shelter becomes a struggle.

Making this reality as the inspiration to provide a better life for Filipinos, BPI Family Savings Bank takes on its mission to give people a chance to make their dreams come true. During Home Guaranty Corporation's (HGC) 6th Charter Day Celebration, BPI Family Savings Bank was given two awards by HGC for Providing the Biggest Volume of Outstanding Guarantee Cumulative for Ten Years which amounted to P3.5B, and for being a Longtime Partner in Home Financing which started in 1986. The awards were presented by Vice-President Noli de Castro.

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK
CONFERRED TWO PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

HGC also cited BPI Family Savings Bank among its distinguished partners. As part of the bank's effort to assist HGC, the institution has been able to provide risk guarantee and fiscal incentives for housing credits. Also during the event, HGC Executives and BPI EVP, Gil Buenaventura performed the symbolic Bolt-In ceremony to signify the strengthening of the continued partnership between HGC and BPI.

BPI Family Savings Bank, true to being the Filipino Family's partner in making goals more attainable, has developed various services that have been instrumental in giving equal opportunity for people to own their dream homes. BPI Family Savings Bank is grateful for the HGC's recognition, as its goal is to help provide a home for every Filipino.

Under the Build your Dream Housing Loan, clients can apply for financing of house acquisition, purchase of lots, townhouse or residential condominium, house construction, home improvement, business expansion. The Build Your Dream Housing Loan may also be used as a multi-purpose loan or to refinance an existing loan with other banks.

Aside from offering the Build your Dream Housing Loan, BPI Family Savings Bank has also partnered with other institutions to provide support to the National Shelter Program of the government.

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Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

Text us your feedback: Inquirer sprt name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

■ Players put pro dreams on hold for PBL finals /A28
■ Bowling future shines in PBC Boysen tilt /A28

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ La Salle seeks No. 9 /A29
■ Wade avoiding comparisons to Jordan /A30

■ Hot Nadal ousts Hewitt /A30
■ Wie bungles Open bid /A30

Bulls take on Gin Kings as q'finals begin

THIS IS THE TIME WHEN teams put everything on the line.

Four teams that took different routes to the playoffs seek a common goal today—getting their quarterfinal bids off to an auspicious start—in the Gran Matador PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Barangay Ginebra, which took the longer route to the quarters by knocking off Air21 in a do-or-die tussle, faces top quarterfinalist Red Bull at the start of the best-of-five affair.

Coca-Cola and Alaska, the other half of the quarterfinal pair, tango in the other match.

The Bulls and the Aces advanced outright to the quarterfinals by finishing third and fourth after the classification round while the Tigers clinched a seat by defeating the Express in a knockout match.

That loss dropped Air21 into a four-team survival round from which Barangay Ginebra emerged the winner.

While the Bulls, Aces and Tigers are coming off long layoffs, the Kings are still fresh from their escape act against the Express.

The injury-plagued Kings turned back the Express in overtime as they relied on the 45-point explosion of Mark Caguioa and the spunkiness of rookie Marc Macapagal in regulation play.

GAMES TODAY
(*Araneta Coliseum*)
4:40 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Alaska
7:35 p.m.—Red Bull vs Ginebra

"All our games are going to be tough," conceded Ginebra coach Siot Tanquingcen. "Right now, we can hardly match up with anybody."

Hit by injuries, Rommel Adducul, Rodney Santos and Aris Dimaunahan will continue to stay in the sidelines.

Jayjay Helterbrand is a doubtful starter after hurting his left hip against Talk 'N Text while rookie Mike Holper's exposure has been limited after a bad fall strained his back.

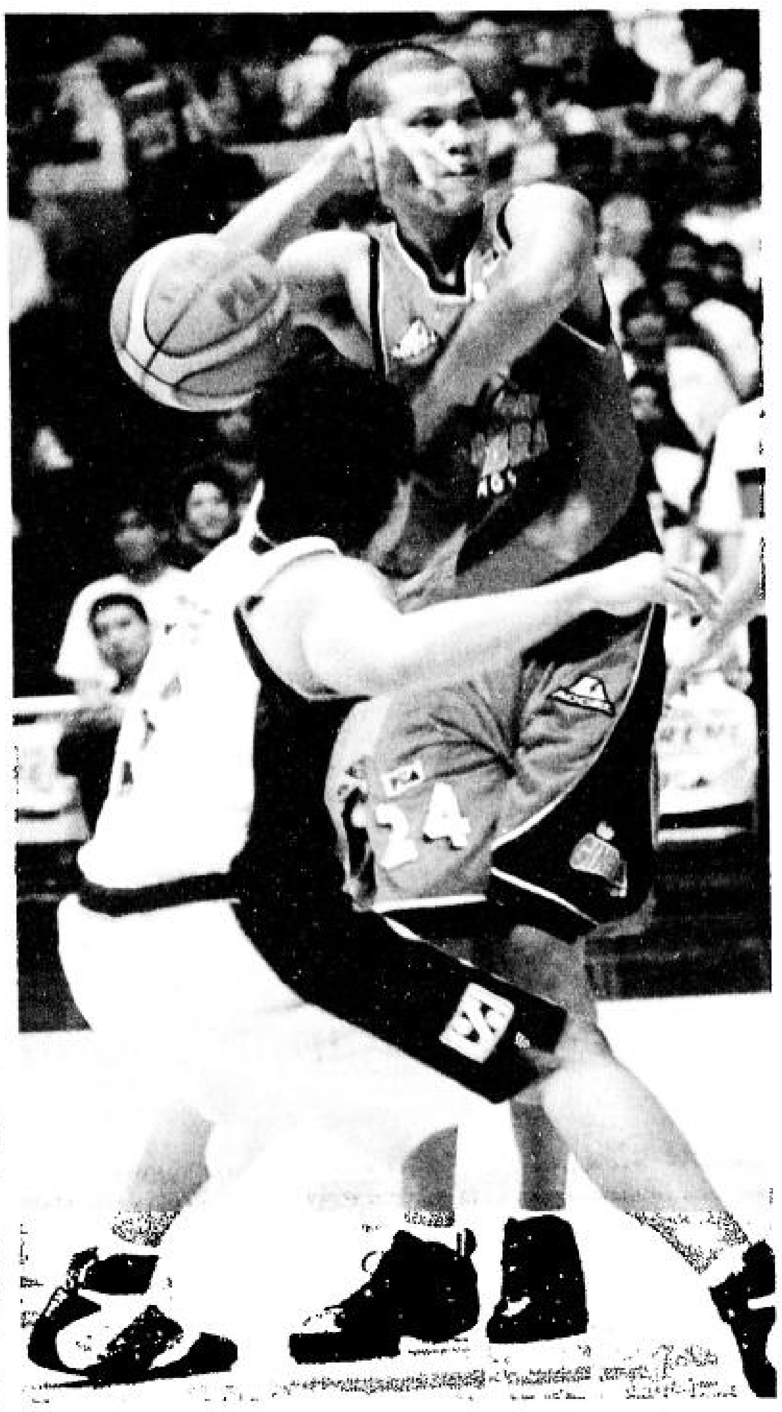
If there's any consolation, though, Andy Seigle was finally reactivated after spending almost the entire conference on the injury list.

With Eric Menk and the 6-foot-9 Seigle on the Ginebra frontline, the Kings are now capable of putting a body on the bullstrong Enrico Villanueva and the stealthy Mick Pennisi.

The Aces, their backcourt getting a boost from the midconference acquisition of Willie Miller, are slight favorites in the other series, which features a subplot involving players who feel they still have an ax to grind against their former teams.

John Arigo and Ali Peek were the cornerstones of the Alaska franchise before they were dealt to Coca-Cola for Jeffrey Cariaso and Reynel Hugnatan.

June Navarro



BARANGAY Ginebra's Allan Salansang (24), in impressive form lately, is expected to rise to the occasion again. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Screening tight for new UAAP season

By Jasmine W. Payo

AFTER A SEASON OF SCANDALS, IMPLEMENTing stricter eligibility rules will be among the main agenda of league officials on the 69th edition of the UAAP.

"Life has to go on, we have to make the best that we can out of it even without La Salle," said league president Luz Sta. Ana of host University of the East at the PSA Forum yesterday at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila.

"Eligibility (screening) will be stricter than before so we won't have similar problems," added Sta. Ana. "The school themselves, it's also their duty to authenticate (school records)."

La Salle will be serving a one-year suspension in all sports for fielding two ineligible basketball players in the last three seasons.

The university, however, protested the severity of the penalty and sought clarification from league officials last April 27.

"That's already final, we're already preparing for the next season," said Sta. Ana during the public sports program sponsored by Red Bull and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

"La Salle is just suspended, but they're still part of the family," said UAAP secretary-treasurer Rolando Perez. "Their school flag will still be there in the opening ceremonies."

Commissioner Elmer Yanga and assistant Ato Badolato also vowed a more effective officiating after several game protests cropped up last year.

"We'll do our best to ensure that there will be fair and just officiating," said Yanga.

Top Asian karters arriving today

THE BULK OF THE FOREIGN CHALLENGE ARRIVES today for the second leg of the 2006 Asian Karting Open Championship slated June 9-11 at the Carmona Circuit Phils. in Carmona, Cavite. The karters will have practice sessions on Thursday and Friday to adjust their kart setups and to familiarize themselves with the venue of the event sanctioned by the Automobile Association Philippines. Filipinos bagged two of the four major titles at stake in the Manila leg of the event last year courtesy of Matteo Guidicelli, who ruled both the Intercon-A and the Rotax Max Seniors crowns. Indonesia, led by the Haryanto brothers Ryan and Rio, remains the Philippines' biggest rival in the battle for top honors. Hong Kong was the latest to confirm its participation in the races.

ATENEO'S Macky Escalona (left) looks for the open man against the Blazers.

Eagles, Warriors collide in Fr. Martin Cup Final 4

ATENEO AND UNIVERSITY OF THE East took out separate quarterfinal foes recently to arrange a Final Four showdown in the Fr. Martin's Cup-Nike Summer League at the Emilio Aguinaldo College gym in Manila.

The Blue Eagles, a perennial semifinalist in the UAAP, soared over the St. Benilde Blazers, 68-58, behind a strong first half anchored by Chris Tiu, who went on to finish with 19 points.

The rising Warriors, on the other hand, held off a spirited rally by EAC to pound out a 65-63 decision as both UAAP squads cross paths in the featured game at 4:30 p.m. today.

But EAC still gained access to the semifinals as a wild card, having the best record by any losing team in the tourney.

The Emilio Aguinaldo cagers clashes with San Sebastian-Cavite dribblers in the other semifinal scheduled at 3 p.m.

The Stags earned a shot at a Finals slot opposite the Generals after tearing Far Eastern U to shreds, 73-49, on Sunday.

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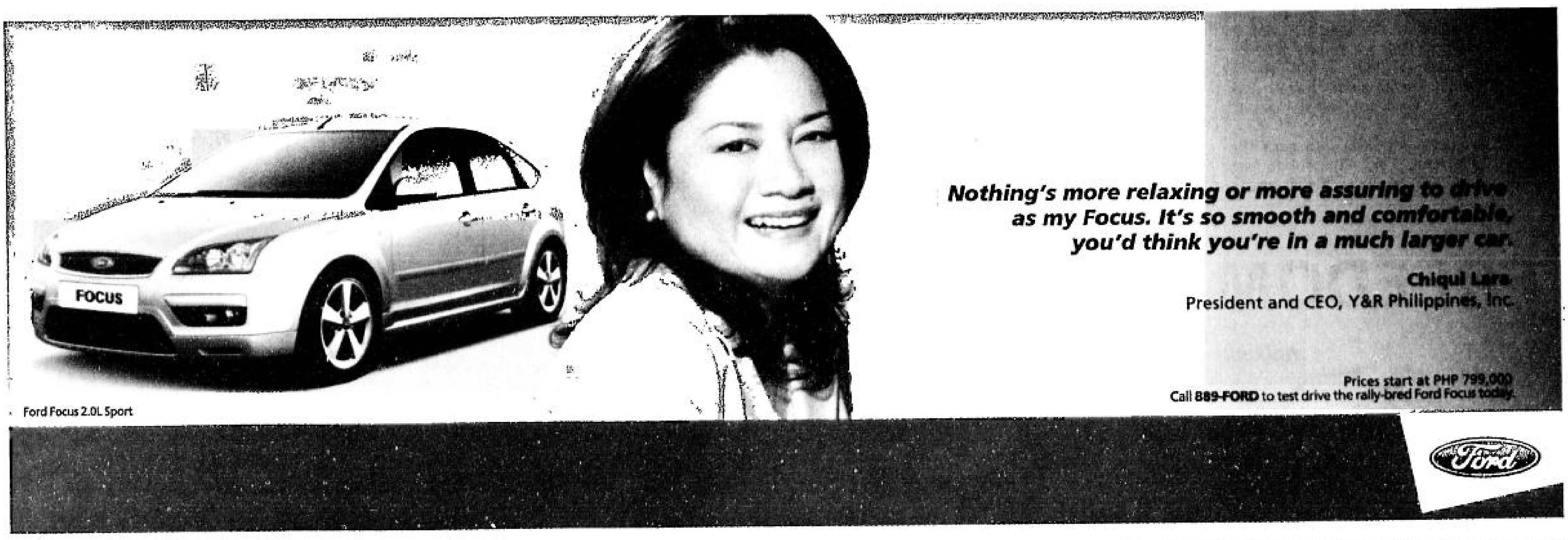
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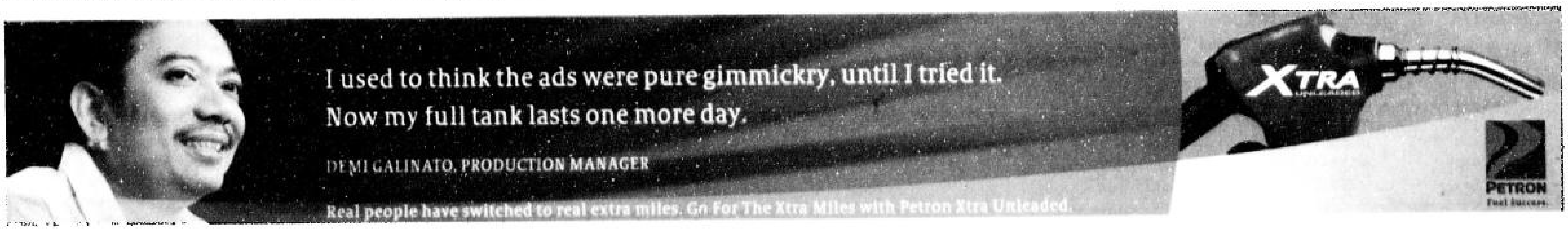
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Bowling future shines in PBC-Boysen tilt

CLUTARIO

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE PHILIPPINE YOUTH TEAM, composed of Ditas Red, Marjo Reyes and Holly Josef, put together 1348 pinfalls to upstage its senior counterparts in the Ladies Class O trios of the 35th PBC-Boysen International Open tenpin bowling championships at the Green Valley in Pasig.

Red, a product of the Tenpin Bowling Association of Makati like Reyes, strung up lines of 254 and 277 to lead the trios which kept the more illustrious RP Team 1 at bay.

Liza Clutario, Cecilia Yap and Jojo Cañare combined for 1304 pinfalls for RP Team 1.

Reyes had 224 and 202, while Josef from the Sta. Lucia stable turned in 248 and 193, to complete the RP Youth's assault in qualifying.

"This is worthy to be noted considering that they beat the big names," said tournament director Archie Pertez. "They could be the future of RP bowling."

Clutario, the 2005 Southeast Asian Games masters champ, and Yap, the Asian Games champion, scored 431 and 436, respectively. Cañare, another SEAG champ, rolled 437 as they placed second.

"I was actually expecting them to overtake us," said Cañare, the 1997 SEAG champ and currently the doubles leader with Elaine Florencio with 934 pinfalls. Cañare said Yap was nursing an injured ring finger.

Irene Benitez (417), Apple Posadas (419) and Florencio (397) made up RP Team 2 which pooled 1233 for third place.

Cañare and Florencio are on the top of the Ladies Class O doubles, pacing fellow RP Team pairs of Kathlynn Lopez and Posadas (887) and Clutario and Yap (866).

Pangasinan cagers pin 11th setback on Laguna

PANGASINAN HUNDRED ISLANDS ENDED A long drought by whipping the Laguna-Sta. Rosa Pistons, 83-70, Monday in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship at the TBA gym in Pangasinan.

Alex Bognot exploded for 30 points to power the Hundred Islands cagers to only their third win in 11 games in the tourney sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Marlon Yambao and Eric Araman ably backed up Bognot with 14 and 10 points.

The Pistons of Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro and Sta. Rosa Mayor Joey Katindig slumped to their 11th straight setback.

Pangasinan opened a 28-21 lead after 10 minutes and never look back.

The scores:

PANGASINAN 83—Bognot 30, Yambao 14, Araman 10, Tiongson 8, Ruiz 8, Aquino 5, Ico 5, Lopez 3, Catacutan 0, Cortez 0, Rol Menor 0, Balares 0.

LAGUNA-STA. ROSA 70—Natividad 10, Aquino 10, Proceso 9, Domingo 8, Mamangon 7, Nolasco 5, Nuqui 5, Prior 5, Vivero 4, Roda 4, Sy 3, Intano 0.

Quarters: 28-21, 50-38, 68-52, 83-70

Players put pro dreams on hold for PBL finals

By Jasmine W. Payo

FOR THESE TOP AMATEUR CAGERS, THE pro league can wait—at least for a few more weeks.

With their surprise entry in PBL Unity Cup finals, winning the title is still on top of the list for the stars of Toyota Otis and Harbour Centre.

"I'm not thinking about the PBA, I want to finish the PBL finals first," said Harbour Centre point guard LA Tenorio at the PSA Forum yesterday at the Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. "I want to win a championship before turning pro."

Toyota Otis' Fil-Am center Joe Devance, expected to be among the top picks in the PBA rookie draft this August, is similarly focused on the best-of-five championship showdown.

"This is my last conference in the PBL, so I don't want to be left out," said Devance, a standout recruit from the University of Texas-El Paso, during the public sports program sponsored by Pagcor and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza. "I want to win a championship.

GAMES TOMORROW
(Olivarez Sports Center)
2 p.m.—Rain or Shine vs Montaña
(Knockout for 3rd)
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Harbour Centre
(Game 1 Finals)

"It would be nice (to be the top draft pick), but it doesn't matter as long as I make it."

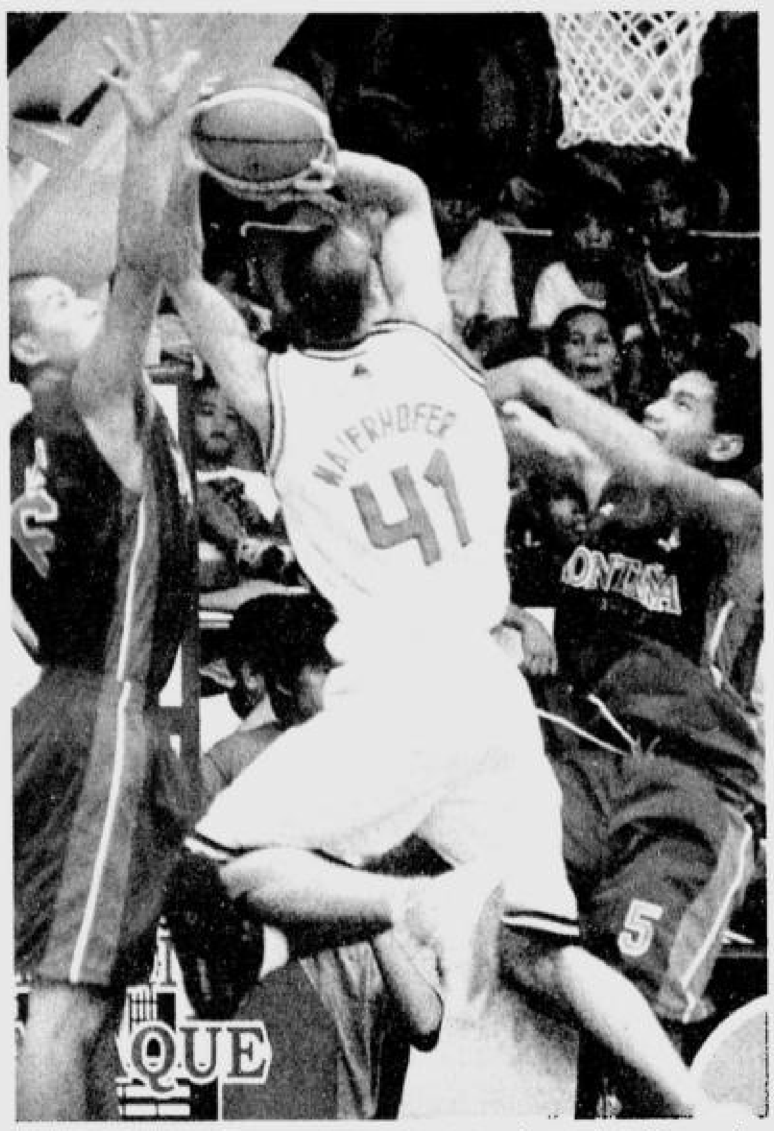
Even Chico Lanete, the Portmasters' most effective second stringer, knows how winning the title can boost his stock.

"I'm lucky that coach (George Galent) has been giving me the important plays," said Lanete. "You have to show that you deserve to go to the PBA."

Harbour Centre leading scorer Joseph Yeo sees a tight matchup between his own squad, studded as it is with UAAP stars, and an opponent bannered by the core of the 2005 NCAA champions.

"I think it's going to be a long series," said Yeo. "We have the UAAP players, while they have the players of Letran."

Behemoth center Mark Andaya pointed out the Sparks' key advantage. "We have teamwork, we've been together longer," said Andaya.



HARBOUR Centre beanpole Rico Maierhofer (center) challenges the defenses of Montaña's Al Magpayo (left) and Larry Rodriguez. RYAN LIM

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Whilly Nilly (6), Yacuy (1), Golden Hawk (2), Ideal Caze (3)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Sutter's Royal (5), Cash Feeder (1), Kai Maki (6), Gold Print (4)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Magpakailanman (1), Hear Me (3), Southern Charm (7), Reigns Supreme (6)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Premiere Event/In D Wind (7), Rombion Rock (1), Something Silver (3), Naman Naman (8), Raging River (6)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Danehill Dave (3), Cat's Secret/Consiglieri (2), C Tonet (7), Speed of Lightning (6)
Race 6—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Dixie Dash (12), Dashing (5), Latina (7), Wine and Roses (2), Fernan Ikaw Pa Rin (3), Besame Mucho (9)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Smiling Jaeda (5), Nico's Incharge (3), Astimegoesby (6), Power Of The Wind (1), Mika's Pride (4)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Uncle (12), Remus (11), Do It David (5), Le Mirage (1), King Aljhun (4), Saint Bernard (13)

The true tragic state of Philippine football

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

(CORRECTION: The email in my previous column which was attributed to American boxing manager Gary Gittelsohn, a big supporter of Manny Pacquiao, ended with the word "extension." The succeeding sentence was merely an editorial remark, included for comic relief. Sorry for the slip. Gittelsohn should be thanked for raising an outcry after Pacquiao was distracted in training by a lawsuit filed by his own manager against a confidante and an adviser in the promotions outfit of the Filipino world boxing celebrity.)

* * *

NOBODY IN THIS LAND LOVES SOCCER more than the president of the Philippine Football Federation, Juan Miguel Romualdez.

This unending devotion to the game popularly perceived to have died here decades ago was detailed in a letter by Mr. Romualdez that refuted allegations on the decayed state of football in the Philippines.

Of course, there are other people who care for RP football as much, if not more, as the PFF head does.

Please read what Pocholo Borromeo, president of the National Capital Region Football Association (NCRFA), has sent us:

* * *

Dear Sir:

Your PDI article of May 29 entitled, "Soccer: Look Who's Betraying the Filipino Youth" was so timely in coming especially for those of us who are in the forefront of local/provincial football development. Our suffering is heavy and ever-increasing. I am the president of the NCRFA. Most of the strongest teams in the country hail from NCR. We know whereof we speak. We are very close to many of the Football Associations all over the country and we make it our business to touch base with as many colleagues as possible.

The suffering is widespread. In men's football, the Philippine is No. 42 out of 45 Asian countries and No. 191 out of 205 all over the world. Cable TV in the Philippines has incessantly featured soccer and Internet accessibility coupled with the showbiz popularity of many major world soccer players has caught the attention of Filipinos. If not for this and the dogged devotion of some schools, colleges and universities, plus the Armed Forces of the Philippines and various soccer NGOs, our sinking would have been steeper and faster.

Is there no money for soccer here? The PFF comparative totals for 2003 through 2005 and the budget for 2006 are, respectively, the following: P27,194,573; P28,458,543 and P34,498,153 and P38,402,616—have money but still no honey!

To make matters worse, the NCRFA discovered on May 22, 2006 that the Securities and Exchange Commission had revoked the PFF's registration on Nov. 3, 2003 for reportorial violations, rendering the NSA "lifeless" as a legal entity, except for the last act of liquidating its affairs no later than Nov. 3, 2006. Among missing requirements are audited financial statements. The NCRFA, as a member of the NSA, immediately filed a formal request to lift the revocation, and sadly, that's where we are today.

Since then, the PFF ceased to exist, as such, starting Nov. 3, 2003. Mr. Juan Miguel Romualdez was "elected" on Nov. 30, 2003, garnering him a "position" that no longer exists. It is the position of many that Mr. Romualdez's "election" was invalid. Because of this, Mr. Romualdez is not the president of the PFF and as soon as he found this out, he should have stopped acting as such, especially on matters concerning the receipt and disbursement of funds and entering into contracts. Section 77 of the Corporation Code states that the officers, whose elections were held before its certificate of registration was revoked, should take over in a holdover capacity. In this case, Mr. Rene Adad.

Be that as it may, Mr. Romualdez assumed what he thought existed, and ruled in a manner that divided, rather than unified and strengthened the NCRFA. We best limit ourselves to our territory and let our brother FA presidents speak for their associations. Rather than work with us to develop what we had, he sought to dismantle the NCRFA first, and pick up the pieces later, so he could call the shots in the NCR. He claims to know better than Ms. Cristy Ramos, Santi Elizalde, Rene Adad, Tomas Lozano, Juan Cutillas and Mari Martinez, among many others, who believe in organization and efficiency.

The assets and the erstwhile being of the PFF have been assumed, for all intents and purposes, by one individual, and one individual alone. That leads us to believe that what we are not today is attributable to one solitary individual. Pit that versus millions of Filipino football youth, who remain under-empowered and you have the biggest tragedy in football.

Thank you for the wake-up call, a "first" of a "thousand steps" to get us back on track.

Lastly, Mr. Romualdez asks you and your readership not to keep a blind eye to what is happening in Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Marikina (wait, these areas are under NCRFA but he has empowered them no end, so as to undermine our Association and foment disunity, disorder and recession). In those areas, it would take a series of articles to show all and sundry who is doing what, badly!

You might want to ask him why he singles out only these FAs and what measurable results his *grassroots* programs have. It cost an arm and a leg but remains disjointed, after all the time and money.

Sincerely:
Jose Vito Borromeo

SPORTSWATCH

'Cordillera Sports for Peace Clinic' set

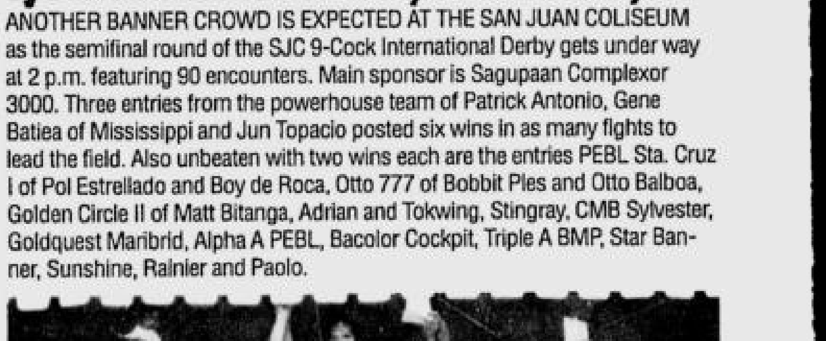
THE PHILIPPINE SPORTS COMMISSION WILL HOLD THE "CORDILLERA Sports for Peace Clinic" from Thursday to Sunday at the PSC Training Camp in Baguio City. Courses in officiating and judging in boxing, karatedo, muay thai, taekwondo, weightlifting and wrestling will be offered. Interested parties may register with Olive Malabanan or Shyrine Gutierrez at the office of Commissioner Ambrosio de Luna. For inquiries, call 303-1030 or 524-5192.

107 fights up in Makati 5-cocker

FORTY-THREE PROMINENT COCKERS FIGHT IT OUT FOR SUPREMACY IN the P1 million WTJ 1st Anniversary 5-Cock Derby which blasts off today at Makati Coliseum. The first of 107 fights in the derby sponsored by B-Meg Derby Ace starts at 2 p.m. Heading the list of participants are former senator Ramon Revilla, Rep. Baby Asistio, Mike Romulo, Boy Javier, Mayor Eddie Alarilla, Jun Santiago and partner Joe Wolcott, NCA International champion Manny Pacquiao, Gerry Ramos, Sundance group, Richard Bates, Col. Katigbak, Butchoy Olano, Philip Chiongbian, Efren Canlas, and Jake Macasaet.

SJC International Derby semis today

ANOTHER BANNER CROWD IS EXPECTED AT THE SAN JUAN COLISEUM as the semifinal round of the SJC 9-Cock International Derby gets under way at 2 p.m. featuring 90 encounters. Main sponsor is Sagupaan Complexor 3000. Three entries from the powerhouse team of Patrick Antonio, Gene Batiea of Mississippi and Jun Topacio posted six wins in as many fights to lead the field. Also unbeaten with two wins each are the entries PEBL Sta. Cruz I of Pol Estrellado and Boy de Roca, Otto 777 of Bobbit Pies and Otto Balboa, Golden Circle II of Matt Bitanga, Adrian and Tokwing, Stingray, CMB Sylvester, Goldquest Maribrid, Alpha A PEBL, Bacolor Cockpit, Triple A BMP, Star Banner, Sunshine, Rainier and Paolo.



CRITERIUM'S BEST: Former Asian and local tour king Victor Espiritu (center) celebrates with his runners-up, second placer Bernard Luzon (right) and third placer Lloyd Reynante (left), after topping the fifth leg in San Fernando, Pampanga, recently and claiming the overall crown in the Philamlife Cycling Search Invitational (CSI) Criterium Race. The five-stage circuit was presented by Philpost and sponsored by Pagcor, PCSO and PLDT.

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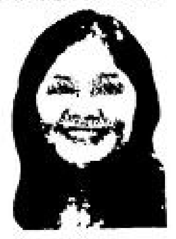
NISSAN

End is near for Fiba's ban on RP hoops

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

OKAY, OK, SO I spoke too soon, wrote too soon, about the bright prospects of the RP team in the 37th Chess Olympiad, based on pre-tournament forecasts, and because it looked that way... for a while.

Now my colleagues are chiding me again, saying that our nationals have indeed, "rewritten history," but for the worse.

Instead of logging our best ever record based on the premise that this is the best team we've ever sent to the Olympiad, the opposite happened.

Ranked 35th before the Turin Olympiad, our men's team slid down to 40-something, our worst-ever record. Even the ladies' significantly improved seeding will not compensate for this, according to my colleagues.

Congressman Butch Pichay made the right forecast, after all.

***

BAP President Joey Lina left yesterday for Kuwait to attend the 2006 Fiba Congress and simultaneous Fiba-Asia election of officers.

If reports are accurate and unforseen hitches do not appear on the horizon, we should be receiving good news by the weekend from Joey, who has been working quietly to have the Fiba ban on the Philippines lifted.

***

With Rain or Shine ousted by Toyota-Otis 0-3 from the PBL Unity Cup finals, owner Raymond Yu is starting to have sleepless nights.

"*Kung sa finals ng* PBL *hindi kami makapasok* even with a complete lineup, *ano pa kaya ang mangyayari sa amin sa* PBA where the competition is much, much tougher. *Baka tambakan kami* by 30 points every game," said Raymond who has been having nightmares over such a scenario.

Welcoat, which took over the Shell franchise this year, was allowed to elevate only three of its players from its lineup to the PBA.

"I don't think we will be able to form a competitive team, even with the available talents in the 'protect 6' expansion pool or the free agent market. But I'm still hopeful we can find a way to make the team stronger, *para naman hindi mawala ang* balance *ng* competitive strength sa PBA," said Raymond.

***

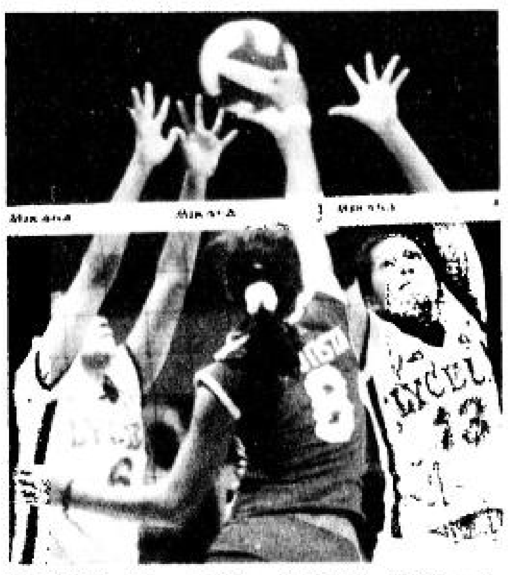
This is interesting. Of the top 5 candidates in the season MVP race, only James Yap of Purefoods is in the top 5 of the Conference MVP contest. So far.

Of course the scenario is bound to change as the conference gets closer to the finale, but as of now, San Miguel players are dominating the top five slots. Beerman Danny Seigle leads with 1125 statistical points, followed by Dorian Peña with 1065. James Yap is third with 1059, followed by Alaska's Nic Belasco with 1040. Danny Ildefonso is running fifth with 1007.

For sure it will be very interesting season and conference MVP race.

H. Centre backs RP Seniors

HARBOUR CENTRE, THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST cargo handling port terminal, will be the main presenter of the 2006 Philippine Seniors Amateur Golf Championships when it is staged June 14-16 at Riviera's Langer course. A major backer of basketball, with its team now in the finals of the ongoing PBL Unity Cup, Harbour Centre ventures into golf for the first time as part of its continuing effort to help in the development of Philippine sports. "We're here not only to support basketball but also to help in the growth of RP sports in general," said Mikee Romero, Harbour Centre chief. The three-day event also serves as the qualifying for the national seniors team. For details, call 5256987, 5245160 or fax 5211587, or at The Riviera at 8889127; (046) 4142836/2888 or fax 9999093; (046) 4142837.



LYCEUM stalwarts Glenda Pintolo (left) and Nerissa Bautista (right) will have their hands full against powerhouse La Salle.

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

La Salle seeks No. 9

LA SALLE AIMS TO KEEP ITS WINNING streak when it faces underdog Lyceum in the Shakey's V-League semifinals today at the Blue Eagle gym in Loyola Heights.

The unbeaten Archers target a ninth straight victory against the Lady Pirates, who bring up the rear in the five-team semifinals.

In the second game at 5 p.m., Adamson eyes to repeat a 25-15, 25-17, 26-24 victory over San Sebastian early in the eliminations and keep its hold of second place.

And while the Lady Falcons are looking to inch closer to the top spot, the Lady Stags are hoping to stay in the hunt for a championship ticket.

STANDINGS	W	L
La Salle	8	0
Adamson	6	2
S. Sebastian	5	4
Far Eastern	5	4
Lyceum	4	5

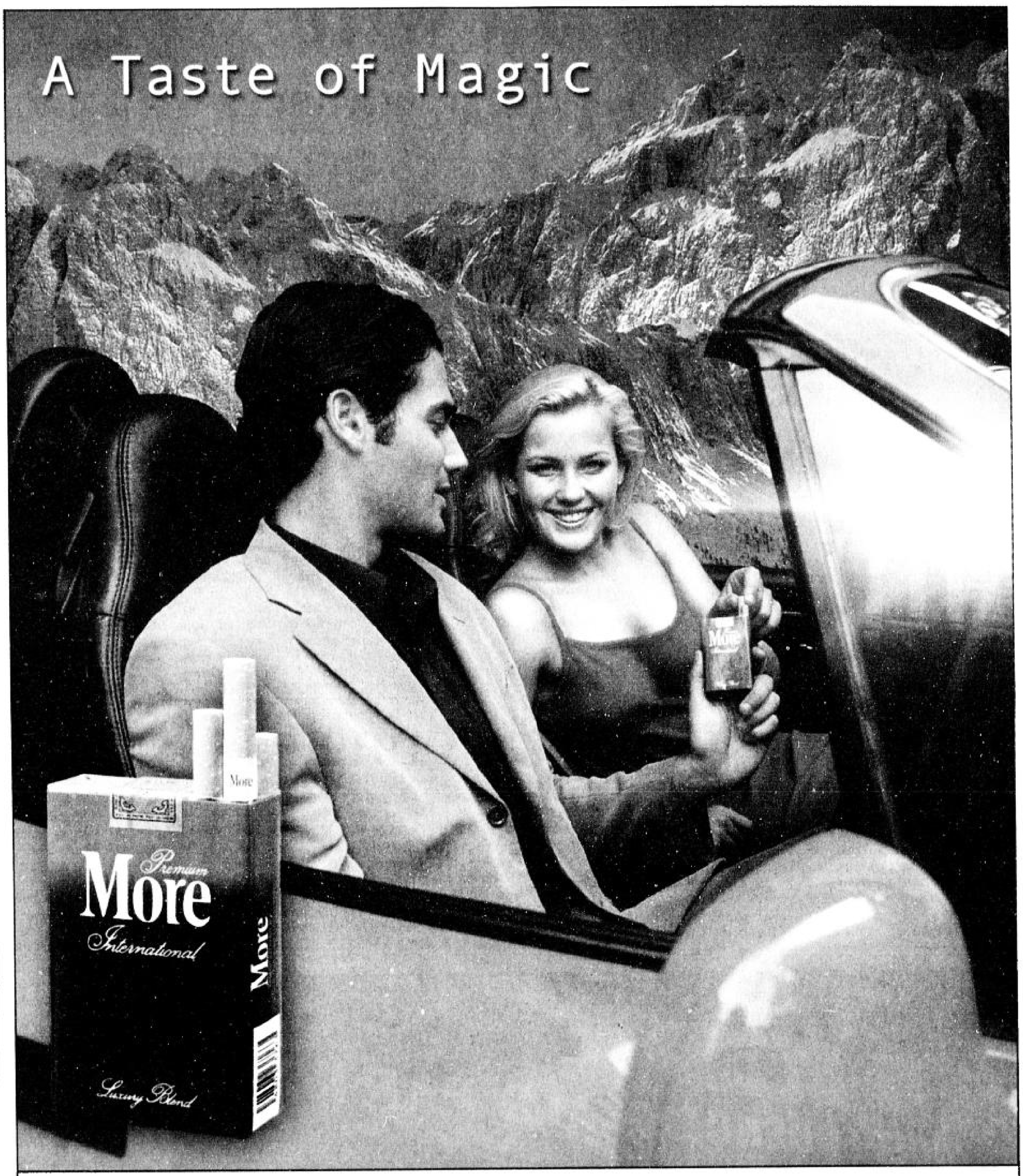
GAMES TODAY
(Blue Eagle Gym)
3 p.m.—Lyceum vs. La Salle
5 p.m.—Adamson vs. San Sebastian

"If we can beat them (Adamson) twice and we win our other games, we'll have a chance of taking the other finals berth so we have to really win this one," said San Sebastian coach Roger Gorayeb.

The match will feature the rivalry of Adamson's tower of power Cherry Rose Macatangay and SSC's dominating Thai import Jaroensri Bualee.

Both ladies pack powerful spikes and are currently in the top three of the league's best scorers.

San Sebastian is fresh from a 25-13, 25-17, 23-25, 25-9 triumph over Lyceum while Adamson is coming into the match on a 25-21, 25-15, 25-13 win over Far Eastern U. *Marc Anthony Reyes*



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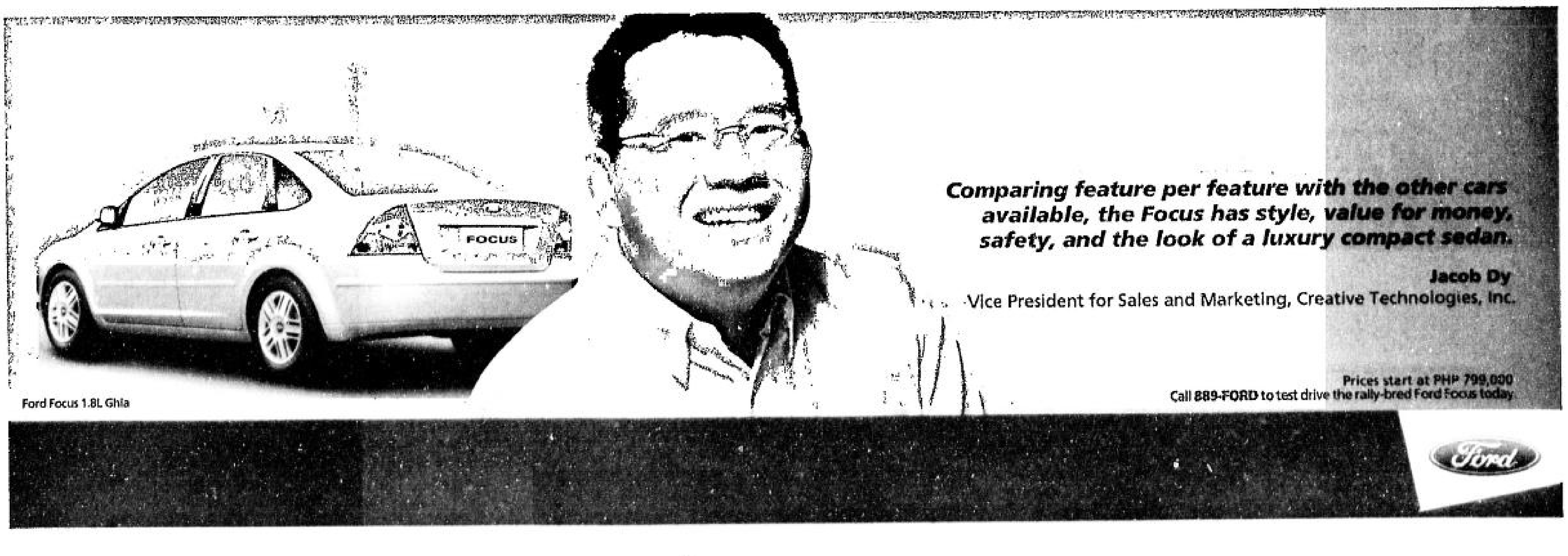

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SPORTS

RAFAEL Nadal celebrates a point. AFP

Wade avoiding comparisons to Jordan

MIAMI—THE COMPARISONS leave Dwyane Wade sheepish.

He knows they're almost inevitable, though. Wade hails from Chicago, grew up a Bulls fan. A Bulls jersey with the number 23 hangs in his arena. His acrobatic, high-flying moves are reminiscent of a certain six-time NBA champion. His body is sleek, muscular. And he has that uncanny knack of taking games over when his team needs it most.

Stop, Wade begs. He's not the next Michael Jordan. To him, the notion is blasphemous.

"I don't think he wants to be compared to anybody," Miami Heat center Shaquille O'Neal said. "I think he wants to be the first Dwyane Wade. I've witnessed a youngster who's earned his spot. He hasn't been given anything."

No, Wade has earned it all. Millions. Fame. Endorsements. Respect. And—most important to him—a chance to play for the NBA championship in only his third year. His Miami Heat will face the Dallas Mavericks for the title, with Game 1 on Thursday in Texas.

On that last point, there is no Jordan comparison.

He needed seven seasons to reach this stage.

"There will never be another Jordan. There's no question about that," Wade said. "The only thing I can try to do is go out and play the game the way I play it, and if people like the way I play, then that's great. And if people don't like the way I play, hopefully I can make them like the way I play.

"But there'll never be another Jordan and people need to stop comparing guys to MJ."

Wade has taken his game to new heights every season in Miami—from 16.2 points on 47 percent shooting as a rookie who reached the Eastern Conference semifinals, to 24.1 points on 48 percent shooting and a trip to the East finals the next year, to 27.2 points and 50 percent shooting this season.

WADE: Incomparable AP

As his numbers have soared, so have the Heat's fortunes.

"No one can look at him, including me, and say we saw this coming at this rate," said Tom Crean, Wade's college coach at Marquette. "But you look at him, you look at his drive, it shouldn't be a big surprise."

Right now, the Heat can only hope 24-year-old Wade's health gets better.

He missed practice on Monday, the team choosing to send him to a doctor instead for continued treatment of a flu-like virus he's been battling since Friday. He scored 14 points that night, helping Miami beat Detroit 95-78 and clinch the East title.

"We're going to be OK," O'Neal said after Monday's practice.

Wade's been better than OK in these playoffs.

He's been one of the best players in the field.

Wade made 62 percent of his shots against the Pistons, averaging 26.7 points, 5.5 assists and 5.2 rebounds. For the playoffs, he's shooting 51 percent, averaging 26.2 points, 6.4 assists, 5.2 rebounds and 2.1 steals.

When O'Neal arrived in Miami two summers ago—after his notorious fallout with Kobe Bryant and getting traded away by the Los Angeles Lakers—the hot topic was how Shaq and another young, standout guard would mesh together.

The answer? Perfectly. *AP*

Hot Nadal ousts Hewitt

Hingis advances

PARIS—RAFAEL NADAL REMAINED UNDEFEATED at Roland Garros by finally beating Lleyton Hewitt.

The defending French Open champion, Nadal moved into the quarterfinals and extended his record clay-court winning streak to 57 matches by eliminating Hewitt, 6-2, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2 Monday.

Hewitt won their three previous meetings, but those were all on hard courts, the most recent in January 2005.

It was a different story at Roland Garros, where Nadal improved to 11-0. He recoiled at the suggestion he's unbeatable on clay.

"I'm going to lose in this tournament, or the next, or the next," Nadal said. "Every match is difficult. Every match I can lose."

But the Spaniard hasn't lost on clay since April 2005, and he moved closer to a showdown in the final Sunday against top-ranked Roger Federer.

"He's very much like Federer, winning so many matches that it's sort of second nature for him," Hewitt said.

Martina Hingis claimed the last spot in the women's quarterfinals, beating Shahar Peer, 6-3, 2-6, 6-3, in the completion of a match suspended overnight. Two unseeded men, Julien Benneteau and Novak Djokovic, earned their first Grand Slam quarterfinal berths, and No. 4 Ivan Ljubicic also advanced.

With a sun-splashed center-court crowd backing Hewitt's upset bid, the Aussie played Nadal on even terms for 2½ hours, winning 11 consecutive points during one stretch.

HINGIS AFP

"Hewitt is someone who, when you let him grab a finger, he takes the arm," Nadal said. "He's a great competitor."

But at 4-all in the third set, Nadal broke serve with a typically nifty shot—a backhand slice that barely cleared the net, landed on the sideline and bounced sideways as Hewitt chased it off the court in vain.

Nadal held at love to close the set and broke three times in the final set, when Hewitt had five of his six double faults.

"Late in the third and the whole fourth set, my serve did go off," Hewitt said. "That made it a lot harder to put pressure on him."

Nadal was coming off a grueling victory that took nearly five hours Saturday. But he looked like the fresher player at the finish, advancing in 3 hours, 17 minutes on the warmest day of the tournament.

And not once did Nadal choke on a banana—a problem that forced an interruption for a visit from a doctor during his third-round marathon.

"I'm not going to stop eating bananas," Nadal said. "But I ate them more carefully than usual."

Joining him on the men's schedule Wednesday will be Frenchman Benneteau, who advanced when Alberto Martin retired with a back injury trailing, 5-1.

Ljubicic beat unseeded Ruben Ramirez Hidalgo, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-2, giving Croatia two men's quarterfinalists at Roland Garros for the first time. Compatriot Mario Ancic advanced Sunday and will face Federer on Tuesday.

Djokovic defeated Frenchman Gael Monfils, 7-6 (5), 7-6 (5), 6-3.

Hingis' opponent Tuesday will be Kim Clijsters. It's a rematch of the Australian Open quarterfinals, which Clijsters won shortly after Hingis' return from a three-year injury layoff.

"I've made a lot of improvement since Australia," Hingis said. "We'll see."

A five-time Grand Slam champion, the No. 12-seeded Hingis is playing at Roland Garros for the first time since 2001. It's the only major event she has yet to win.

The 19-year-old Peer fell short in her bid to become the first Israeli, male or female, to reach a Grand Slam quarterfinal. But she gave Hingis some anxious moments.

After taking a 5-2 lead, Hingis hit a handful of shaky shots trying to seal the victory but did so when Peer hit errant backhands on the last three points.

"To be really scared of losing, she would have to be closer to be really totally scared," Hingis said. *AP*

Wie bungles US Open bid

WIE AP

SUMMIT, NEW JERSEY—MICHELLE Wie failed in her bid to become the first woman to play in the US Open, teasing a frenzied gallery for 27 holes until three straight bogeys sent her to a 3-over 75 and into the middle of the pack on Monday.

"Obviously, I'm disappointed I didn't make it," she said. "I'm satisfied with the way I tried."

Wie opened with a 68 on the easier South course and still had a chance to get one of 18 spots available to the 153-player field at Canoe Brook heading to the back nine. Needing at least one birdie to have a chance, her inability to master the greens finally caught up with her. And the cheers from 3,500 fans which carried her throughout the day turned to sympathetic applause at the end.

She finished at 1-over 143, five strokes short, and in a tie for 59th. Most of the shots were given away on birdie putts inside 12 feet which she missed throughout the day, especially in the morning.

"The greens are difficult for her. So many subtle breaks," her father B.J. Wie said. "I'm very proud of her. A little disappointed, but very proud." *AP*

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WORLD CUP

Brazilians popular even in practice

BERLIN—BRAZIL'S FIRST PUBLIC appearance in Germany is expected to prove popular.

The World Cup Organizing Committee is predicting that 25,000 people will jam into Offenbach's soccer stadium Thursday to watch the defending World Cup champions train.

It will be free to get into the stadium, the home of Offenbacher Kickers, but fans will still need a ticket. Several booths will open Tuesday and possibly Wednesday at the Kickers' Bieberer Berg ticket office to give them away, Fifa said Monday.

Each person will be able to get a maximum four tickets.

Meanwhile, England coach Sven-Goran Eriksson said he may replicate the robot-style celebration dance of striker Peter Crouch if England wins the World Cup.

"I enjoyed his dance very much," Eriksson said Monday. "Will I do it? If we win the World Cup, I will do whatever you want me to do."

The public interest in Crouch's goal celebration has also prompted the manufacturers of the classic table soccer game Subbuteo to make a figurine of the 2-meter (6-foot-7) striker in mid-dance. *AP*

Army, Air Force XIs rip opening day foes

POWERHOUSE SQUADS PHILIPpine Army and Philippine Air Force debuted mightily in the 2006 Adidas Futsal Championship at the F-MAC Gym in La Salle-Greenhills with overpowering wins over separate foes.

The Armymen, banking on the heady plays of Wilson dela Cruz, nipped Pasargad Football Club, 6-4, while Air Force, with Emilio Caligdong proving to be unstoppable, swamped the Veterans FC, 6-2.

In women's play, Far Eastern got its campaign off to a rousing start after Ruchell Latap blasted two goals in a 5-2 victory over the Archers.

Roel Gener sparked the assault of the Army booters after scoring the team's first goal right in the first minute and boosted the team to a 5-2 lead in the first half. Gener added another goal eight minutes later, while Dela Cruz scored in the 10th and 15th minutes of the first half.

The event sponsored by Adidas and sanctioned by the National Capital Region Football Association opened with simple rites capped by a kickoff ceremony led by Adidas executive Goody Custodio, chief finance officer Joel Orense, NCRFA president Jose Vito Borromeo and LSGH athletic director Nongnong Calanog.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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NICOLE Beverly: Camera-ready.

ROBERT Chien: The new dad is "wonderful."

Light and love of Lea's life

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

NEW MOM LEA SALONGA shares with INQUIRER Entertainment the latest photos of her daughter Nicole Beverly Chien at two and a half weeks old.

Baby Nicole was born on May 16.

The e-mailed answers to our questionnaire came with an apology. "Sorry [for the delay]… but life's gotten a bit busy for us."

TAKE FIVE

Still, the photos came with cute captions.

One blurb read: "Only two and half weeks old and posing already!"

Another showed a yawning Nicole with the one-liner: "Holy lungs… I know I've got the lungs for it!"

What is it like being a mom? Is it everything you expected it to be?

So far, it's wonderful, wonderful, wonderful being a mom! I'm loving every single minute of it. It's tough, though, getting up to change or feed her when I'm severely sleep deprived, which is where Rob comes in. And he's been stellar.

My expectations of motherhood? My approach to everything is very practical and pragmatic. This was no exception. I didn't see motherhood as an experience that would complete me as a woman. I considered myself complete already. I wasn't going to put pressure on Nicole to be the completion of me. That wouldn't be fair to her. I want to set an example for her, that a woman should already be complete in herself before raising a family.

CHILD and mom, who loves "every minute."

LEA at Asian Hospital with mom Ligaya: Call her "Abu."

How's Rob as dad? How's the new *lola* (or Abu, which is how Ligaya Salonga prefers to be called)?

The new daddy is wonderful… he's wonderful with Nicole. He changes the diapers and feeds her (with bottled breast milk), cradles her and takes a gazillion pictures every day. Abu (my mom) is super excited, and enjoys being around her. She hasn't been able to baby-sit for an extended period of time yet.

Have you figured out the feeding/diaper change routine?

Rob has been helping out tremendously. There are mornings when I have the hardest time waking up, so he takes over the diaper routine then brings her to me to nurse. When I'm up and about though, then I do as much as I can before turning in for the night. I breastfeed on demand, which means anything from

LIGHT/ A2-2

RP 'Idol' vs 'PBB'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

EVEN THE MOST UNINterested viewers caught the implication: the next incarnation of ABS-CBN's "Pinoy Big Brother," dubbed "Pinoy Dream Academy," is going head to head against ABC 5's "Philippine Idol."

"Dream Academy" premieres in August; "RP Idol" in July.

Both are reality singing contests in which unknowns are housed together and undergo training and/or a makeover in front of the camera.

Both are foreign franchises. "Academy" is from the same Dutch company behind "PBB"; "RP Idol" is from FremantleMedia, based in the United Kingdom.

According to "PBB" director Lauren Dyogi, Endemol's show is called "Fame Academy" in the UK; "Star Academy" in France; "La Academia" in Italy and Spain.

"The housemates will be called students and they'll still live in the same house [on Mother Ignacia Avenue, Quezon City], but we'll modify it to include workshop and rehearsal areas, a recording studio, principal's office and teachers' lounge," Dyogi told INQUIRER in a phone interview.

He added that "Dream Academy" will be aired nightly. "If 'Philippine Idol' is anything like 'American Idol' it will air only twice a week."

Perci Intalan, ABC 5's head of Creative and Entertainment Production, corrected Dyogi: "'Philippine Idol' is also a nightly, prime time show."

'Why not?'

Clearly, "Dream Academy" is envisioned as a direct competitor of "RP Idol."

Dyogi said, "I don't see why we can't put up another reality-singing contest on air. The Philippines will never run out of talented performers."

Intalan seemed unruffled by the impending showdown. "It's really exciting. First, ABC 5 set the trend with the celebrity dance competition 'Shall We Dance' [ABS-CBN is also coming out

RP/ A2-2

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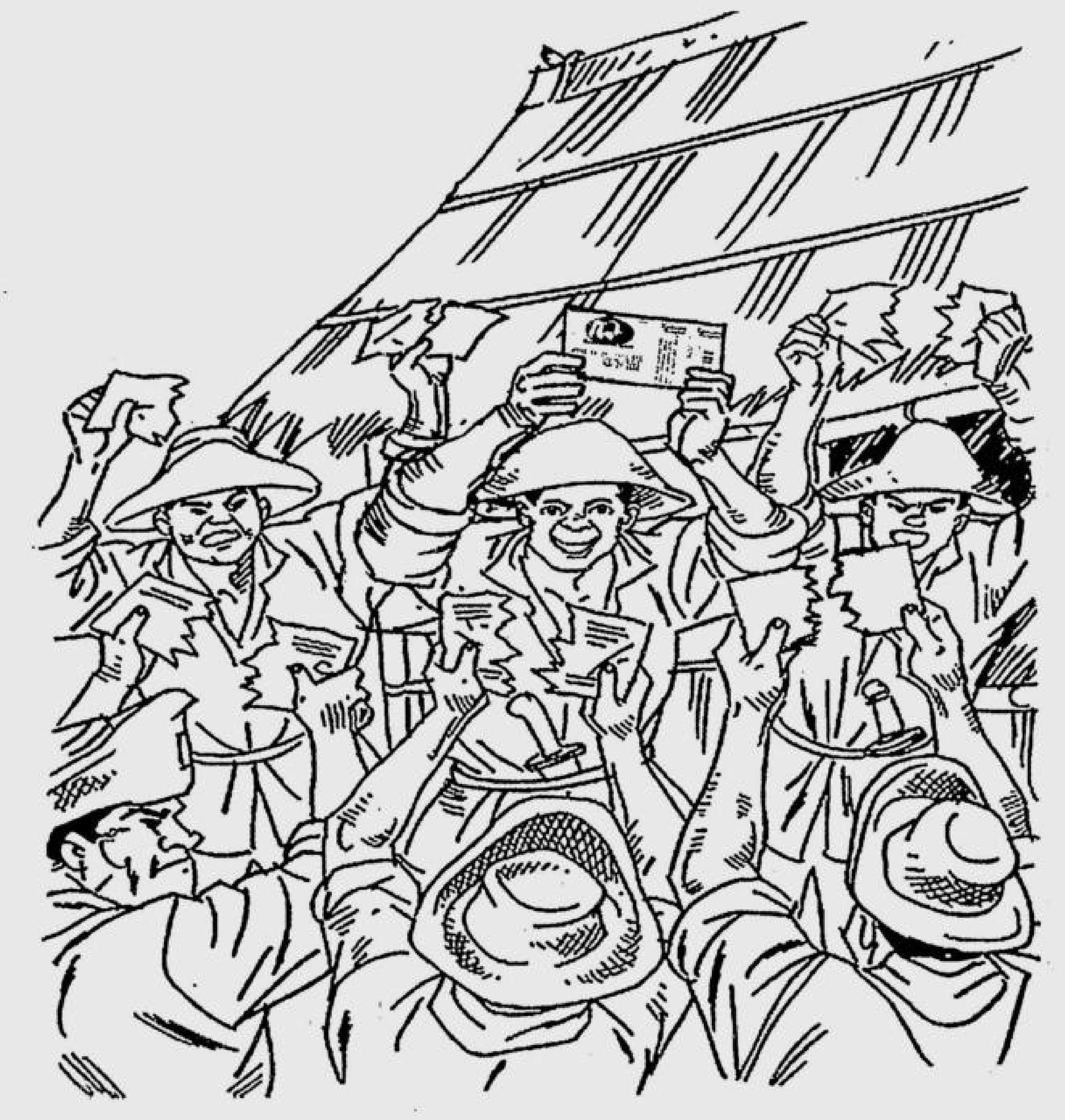

Ngayong ika-12 ng Hunyo, sabay-sabay nating ipagbunyi ang ating kalayaan.

Enchanted Kingdom, bukas sa araw ng Kalayaan, ika-12 ng Hunyo mula alas diyes ng umaga hanggang alas diyes ng gabi. Espesyal ang araw na ito! Espesyal din at mahaba ang ating mga paputok pagdating ng alas nuebe ng gabi. Halina't magsaya!

Mula Hunyo 5 hanggang Agosto 3 ang Enchanted Kingdom ay bukas ng Sabado at Linggo lamang sa ganap na ika-10 ng umaga hanggang ika-10 ng gabi. Ang paputok ay mapapanood ng alas nuebe ng gabi.

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"PBB Teens" winner Kim, with her favorite housemate, Gerald. RUDY ESPERAS

RP 'Idol' vs 'PBB'

From page A2-1

with its own celebrity dance contest "You Can Dance" in response]. Now, even before it premieres, 'Philippine Idol' is proving to be so popular that other networks are making big changes to their flagship shows. Ultimately, it's good for the viewers because they will have more options."

End of war?

Interestingly, Intalan noted, two RP "Idol" judges (Pilita Corrales and Francis Magalona) are from GMA 7, while the third one (Ryan Cayabyab) and the host (Ryan Agoncillo) are from ABS-CBN.

Did he think "RP Idol" would lead to a ceasefire in the network wars?

Intalan quipped: "They are the best not only in the two networks, but in the entire entertainment industry. All three judges realize the enormity of their responsibility. They know that they need to produce an 'RP Idol' who can stand side by side with 'Idols' from all over the world."

Dyogi insisted that "Dream Factory" was not an exact copy of the ultra-successful FreeMantle product. "Instead of judges or Big Brother," he said, "there'll be instructors and a principal. It's a global search. We'll also conduct auditions in Filipino communities in Australia, Dubai, Japan, Italy and the United States, through The Filipino Channel."

BOBBY Barreiro, ABC 5

LAUREN Dyogi, ABS-CBN

Dyogi admitted that reformatting "PBB" was part of a bigger game plan. "We want to give it a rest this year so viewers will miss it." He added, "'PBB' is still evolving."

'Charity' program

Roberto Barreiro, ABC 5 managing director for TV Operations, Sales and Marketing, pointed out that, in the Philippines, "Big Brother" has "evolved from a naughty, almost soft-porn show (in Europe) into a charity, socially-relevant program."

Randy Dellosa, PBB resident psychologist, acknowledged that much, saying, "That was how we Filipinized the show."

Light and love ...

'My mom is super excited'

From page A2-1

every hour to every three to four hours.

How do you feel when you look at your baby's face?

Extremely happy. She's the light and love of my life.

What's her nickname?

We call her Nic. I've always liked boyish nicknames for girls. If we have another girl, chances are she'll have a boyish nickname, too.

What convinced you to breastfeed?

I always knew that breastfeeding was the best for babies, and I have many friends who made the same decision. Just knowing that every immunity I've had through my life will be passed on to her was something that helped me determine this mode of nourishing her. That, and the convenience... when we're together, her milk is ready, and at the right temperature.

When is the christening? Do you have a lineup of *ninong* and *ninang* (godparents)?

We haven't yet scheduled the baptism, but we do have some *ninong* and *ninang* ready [among them Gina de Venecia, wife of Speaker Jose de Venecia]. All of them are close friends of the family, people that we know will help us raise Nicole to be the best person she can be.

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3 TAKE THE LEAD
MTRCB. PG-13

4 THE INSIDE MAN
MTRCB. PG-13
1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00

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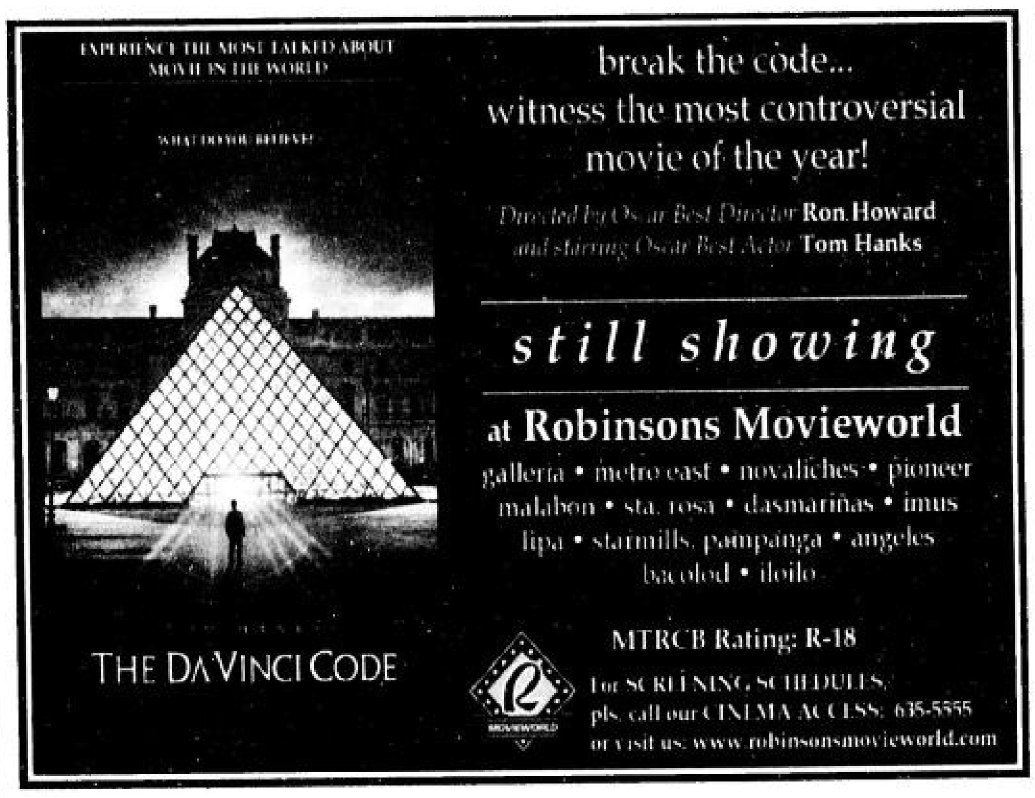

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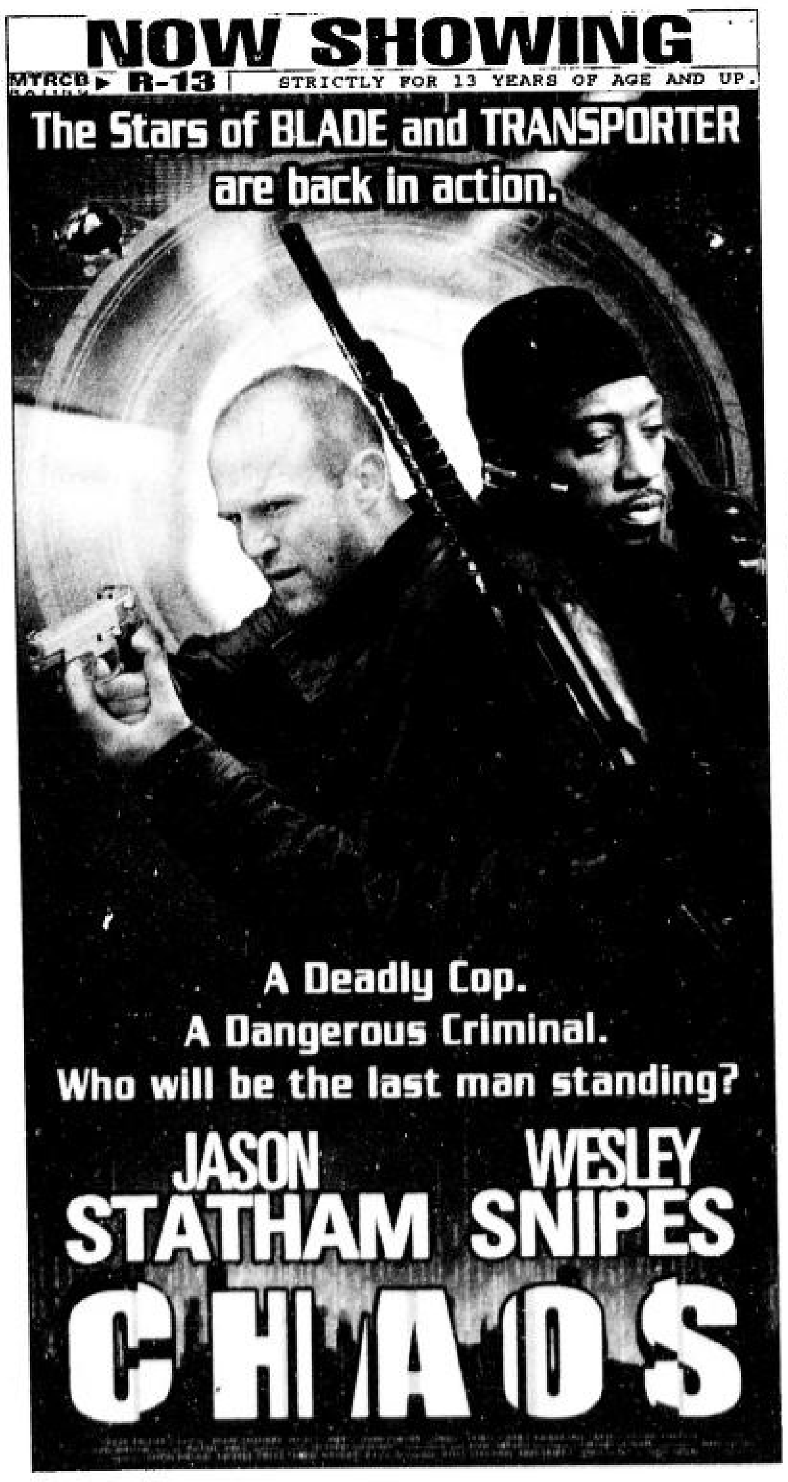

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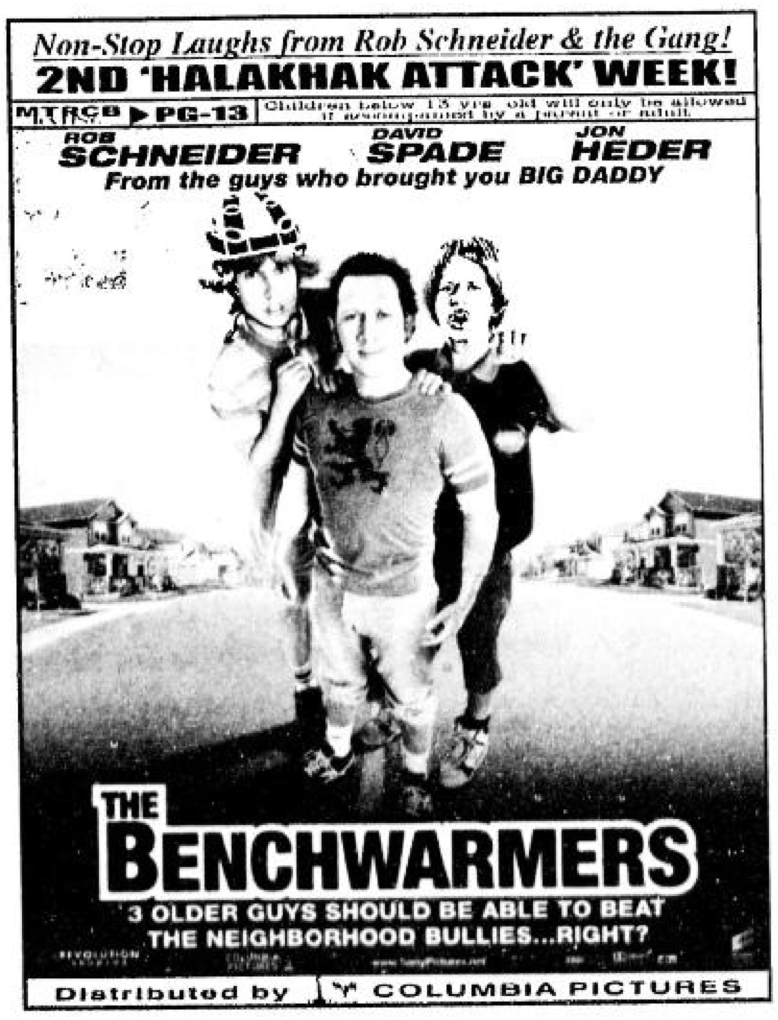

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MANAY PO
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MANAY PO
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3	THE INSIDE MAN	12:10, 2:55, 5:40, 8:25, 11:05	PG-13
4	TAKE THE LEAD	11:40, 2:25, 5:10, 7:55, 10:35	PG-13

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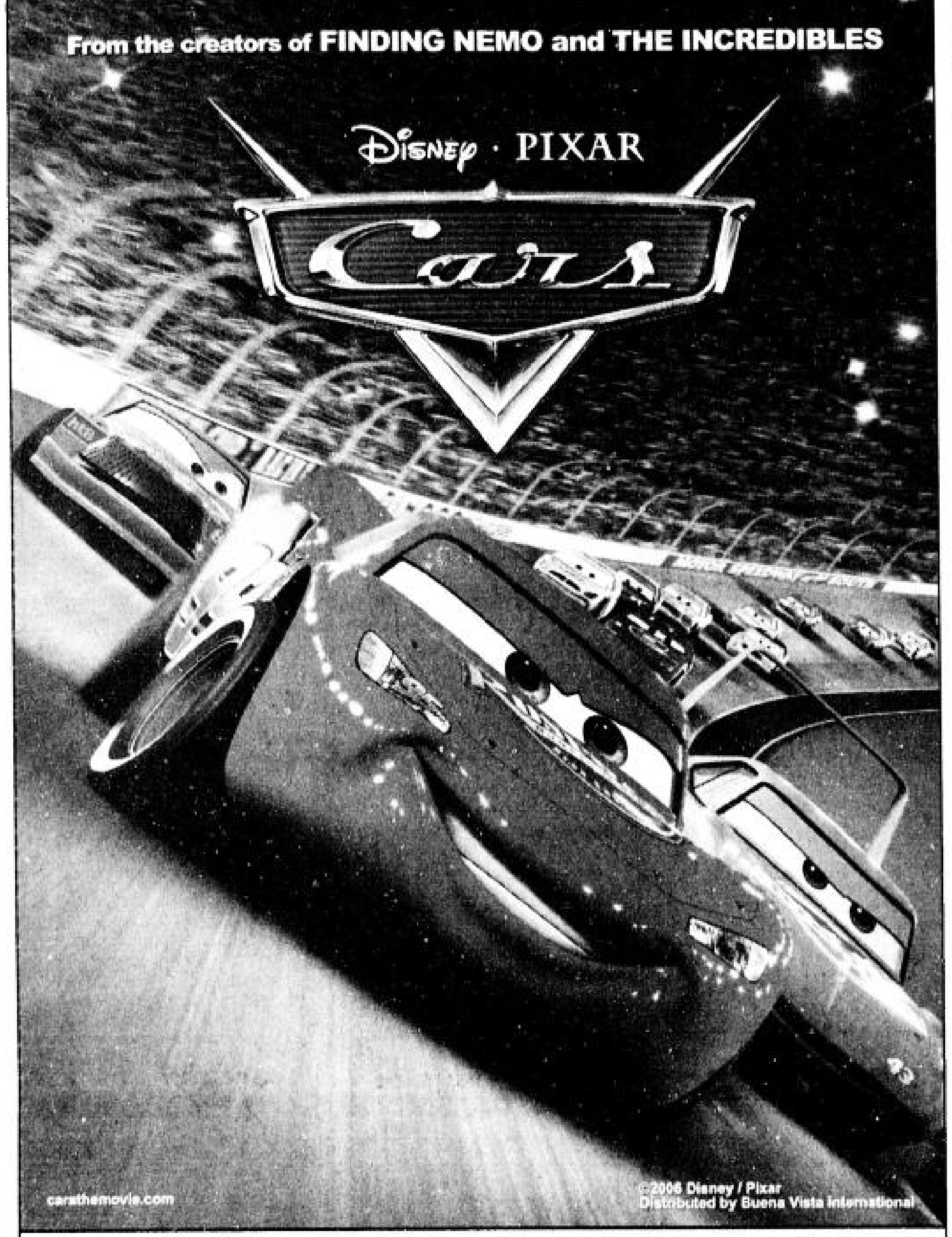
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'Captain Barbell' needs to fight for redemption

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

REVIEW

THE FIRST FIVE EPISODES OF "Captain Barbell"—GMA 7's effects-heavy series about a tormented teen with superhuman powers, show some technical proficiency. But for all its snazzy digital effects, competent stunt sequences, and some decent acting, the series started off shakily, mainly because it mimicked many elements from other existing superhero stories. The title character's revamped origin is more science fiction-based, and while there's audacity in several ideas presented in its first episode, this re-imagining has led to an uncomfortable hodgepodge of "Smallville," "Spider-Man," and even "Terminator."

Ambitious

This hasn't gone unnoticed. One can look at certain scenes and situations and name the movie, TV show, or character that inspired them. Younger viewers may not be discerning of such things yet, but older ones could get distracted or turned off by the recurring non-originality.

As previously noted, the show started ambitiously. Cramped with superimposed digital wizardry and fancy props, the initial episode introduced a future, year 2106, when the Philippines is a major superpower, a place where scientific breakthroughs like genetic manipulation and cloning flourish.

A "Barbanium"-enhanced warrior, Captain B (Paolo Bediones) sends his wife and child to the past, to hide from a powerful "General." There, a century back, Mrs. B (Snooky Serna) must prevent the General's rise to power, but her time machine crash-lands and accidentally kills Pinky Amador's pregnant character (her unborn daughter survives).

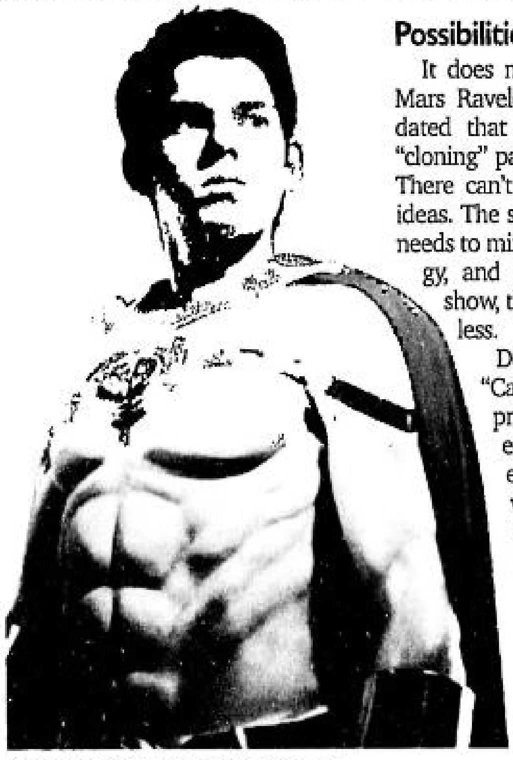
See the "Smallville" parallel yet? That daughter is an analogue of Lana Lang, Clark Kent's love interest, whose parents were killed by a meteorite shower in the show's first episode. Here, "Lana" is Lea (Rhian Denise Ramos), "Clark" is Teng (Richard Gutierrez), the kindly "Kents" are the Magtanggols (Dante Rivero and Gloria Sevilla), the über-rich "Luthors" are Viel and Levi Villian (Richard Gomez and Patrick Garcia), and "Smallville" is the thriving town of Marravelos. That's just for starters.

Teng, not a costumed hero until episode 5, lives a traumatic life, just like poor Peter Parker. It's exhausting to watch him repeatedly mauled by bullies and deal with the shocking demise of his adoptive father. Add a crazy Wolverine-like freak with glass shards for "claws" to the list... it's so contrived sometimes, that we don't root much for the hero, if at all.

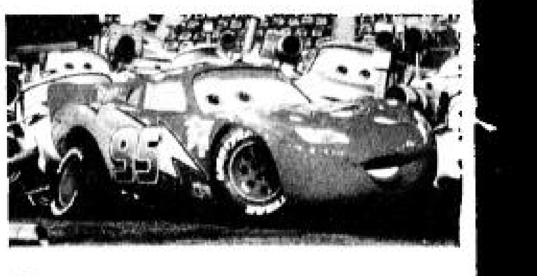
Possibilities

It does make one wonder: Has Mars Ravelo's concept become so dated that the show resorted to "cloning" parts of other properties? There can't be a shortage of new ideas. The series' creative team just needs to mine the existing mythology, and since this is a fantasy show, the possibilities are limitless.

Despite its imperfections, "Captain Barbell" shows promise. The big-budgeted series can still prove escapist to those who want their regular action fix thunderous and eye-popping. It just needs to overcome its major clunks immediately, and breathe life into an original Pinoy super-champ with more imaginative adventures and back stories.



RICHARD Gutierrez, lead star



Cars

With the voices of Paul Newman, Owen Wilson, Tony Shalhoub, Bonnie Hunt

Directed by John Lasseter

Lightning McQueen is a hotshot neophyte race car that's driven to succeed. After being detoured to a sleepy Route 66 town, the overachieving rookie discovers that "life is about the journey; not the finish line" and that "there are more important things than trophies, fame and sponsorship." Peter Travers of Rolling Stone calls this Pixar animated film "a sure thing ...What [this movie] teaches is how to blend brash comedy with technical astonishments so that each enhances the other." Josh Tyler of Cinemablend.com raves that it's a "love letter to the heyday of the American road." Richard Corliss of Time describes this flick as "an instant classic... existing both in turbo-charged today and the gentler 1950s, straddling the realms of Pixar styling and old Disney heart." Opens June 8.

Take the Lead

Stars Antonio Banderas, Dante Basco, Rob Brown, Alfre Woodard

Directed by Liz Friedlander

A Latin hottie volunteers to teach tough delinquents the heady joys of ballroom dancing. At first, the kids scoff at him, but they eventually learn how to samba and salsa. Kit Bowen of Hollywood.com rants: "Maybe they should have titled this hackneyed [tale] 'Stand and Dance' or 'Shall We Dance... in Detention.'" Nancy Churnin of the Dallas Morning News commends Fil-Am Dante Basco who, along with Jenna Dewan and Marcus T. Paulk, "perform one heck of a steamy tango number." Tracy Allerton of the South Florida Sun-Sentinel complains: "[Apart from] the rousing ending, which combines ballroom and hip-hop moves in an exciting way, the film offers nothing we haven't seen before." Opens June 7.

Welter of contradictory motiv

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

IN "X-MEN: THE LAST STAND," HUmans' fear of the superpowers of mutants is solved by the discovery of a "cure" for mutancy.

With this new antidote, mutants can become "normal" members of society.

However, some mutants, including confederation of leaders Magneto (**Ian McKellen**) and Charles Xavier (**Patrick Stewart**) are not so sure. They see in the "cure" an attempt by government to control mutants' exceptional powers.

These contrary views force mutants to choose which side to take in the dispute. Magneto plays a wild card in the person of Jean (**Famke Janssen**), a mutant with the greatest powers.

The problem with her is the fact that her powers become uncontrollable when her personality is taken over by a vicious persona named Phoenix. It is this dark and sinister force that has made her kill her own boyfriend.

Fears about Jean's "runaway" powers turn out to be merited when she wreaks havoc on Xavier himself. With his rival leader now disposed of, Magneto rallies most of the world's mutants to wage war against the government, to prevent their collective emasculation through the devious use of the antidote.

Where does Wolverine (**Hugh Jackman**) figure in all this? He decides to fight against Magneto's forces, and forces his beloved Jean to make the supreme sacrifice so that her powers can't be misused by Magneto for his own dark ends.

Thus does the final episode of the "X-Men" trilogy shape up as a many-layered morality tale, in which good sometimes disguises itself as evil, and vice versa.

This is because the motives of both government and mutant leaders are often suspect, so we can't be sure which side should end up on top.

Of course, viewers tend to favor the mutants' cause, because they empathize with their odd-man-out plea for understanding and acceptance.

After a while, however, the confusing welter of contradictory motives as the plot unfolds results in an occasional disconnect that diminishes viewers' involvement in the conflict and action.

Another problem is the excessive number of mutants who figure in this final episode. With so many characters quickly making their entrances and exits, the movie loses some of its focus and capacity to elicit viewers' empathy.

Yes, the mutants' diverse range of powers is exciting to watch, but the variety soon takes its toll on the movie's emotional quotient.

That's why, at film's end, no character "owns" the production. On point of talent, McKellan and Jackman are clearly superior to the other cast members but even their characters can't provide the emotional fulcrum that the production needs to rise to a cathartic and truly illuminating climax.

'Superman Returns'

WINNERS of Reader's Digest's Trusted Brands 2006 are invited to a free screening of "Superman Returns" on June 30 at Premiere THX Theater, Amorsolo St. in Makati.

Seats may be reserved in exchange for a coupon of Reader's Digest May is-

Kids to watch: Centermates

KID FIT

IMAGINE THE RIVERBANKS Activity Center on a scorching summer afternoon. The newest kids' show group, Centermates, was set to perform there—no air-conditioning, seats mostly empty.

No matter. Randell Raymundo, Migs Raymundo, Christelle Peig, Jasmin Salvo and Carlyn Ocampo did their opening number. Passersby started to trickle in. A few more songs, and the place filled up. Halfway through the show, the place was jumping!

Come autograph-signing time, eager new fans swamped the group.

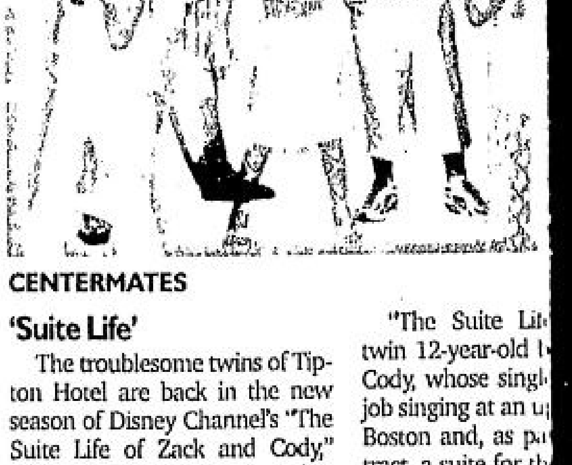
Were they born stars?

"No! No! No!" the singing kids protested. Caryn said, giggling, "I couldn't carry a tune before."

Butch Albarracin, founder and CEO of Center for Pop Music Philippines, where the group trained, had a theory: "Stardom is prepared for. That's what they did."

The Centermates relished the applause: "*Malupit!*" "*Parang ang galing-galing namin!*" "*Ang saya-saya!*" "*Sobrang* exciting!"

They have a self-titled CD out, and another performance set on June 18, 7 p.m. at the AFP Theater, Camp Aguinaldo Theater in Quezon City. Nyoy Volante is their special guest.



CENTERMATES

'Suite Life'

The troublesome twins of Tipton Hotel are back in the new season of Disney Channel's "The Suite Life of Zack and Cody," which premiered on Saturday. The next episodes air on the next three Saturdays, 6:30 p.m.

"The Suite Li
twin 12-year-old
Cody, whose singl
job singing at an u
Boston and, as pa
tract, a suite for th
The hotel has a sw
and a game room
find many new fri

OPENING THIS WEEK

Inside Man

Stars Denzel Washington, Clive Owen, Jodie Foster, Willem Dafoe

Directed by Spike Lee

A bank is put under siege, "surgically planned" by four masked robbers who hold 50 people hostage. Detectives and negotiators scramble to unravel the mystery, but the criminals seem "one step ahead of the game." Todd McCarthy of Variety hails it as "a thriller that aims to be different… [with] a flashy cast, clever script and vibrant showcasing of New York City. Lee makes a point of showing the city and, by extension, American society top to bottom, from politicos and power players to drug-addled deadbeats." Jami Bernard of the New York Daily News points out that "this is the first purely commercial movie from the strident, chip-on-shoulder director …Working within the confines of a popcorn movie seems to have set him free to promote his agenda more enjoyably." Roger Ebert of Chicago Sun-Times disagrees: "The whole plot smells fishy. It's not that the movie is hiding something, but when it's revealed, it's been left sitting too long at room temperature." Opens June 7.

The Omen

Stars Liev Schreiber, Julia Stiles, Mia Farrow, Seamus Davey-Fitzpatrick

Directed by John Moore

This remake of the 1976 thriller by director Richard Donner re-tells the tale of an orphan, Damien, who was adopted by an American diplomat and his clueless wife. Horrors and dire warnings follow the child who turns out to be the long-prophesized Anti-Christ. Joe Utichi of Film Focus comments: "Care as [Moore] might for the original, he commits a remake's cardinal sin: redundancy. His approach fails entirely to capitalize on Damien's creepiness… the only adrenaline-pumping moments in the film come from jump-scares throughout." Jeremiah Kipp of Slant Magazine agrees: "This latest unnecessary remake… lacks even the benefit of novelty. [It's] a slapdash affair meant to make a lot of money." Rob Vaux of Flipside Movie Emporium points out: "Moore's version looks sharper and plays classier than the first film, but still hides the same old silly fright mask underneath." Opened yesterday.

es

sue. The first 100 respondents will each receive two tickets to the exclusive screening.

Reader's Digest's winning brands include Bank of the Philippine Islands, Boysen Paints, Canon, Emperador Brandy, Equitable PCI Bank, Metrobank, GE, Insular Life, Nokia, Panda, Petron, Philamlife, Philippine National Bank, Pilot, Sharp and Tupero Water Purifier

'Café Bossa'

ONLY three months after the release of Sitti's debut album, "Café Bossa," has already been certified gold (at least 15,000 units sold). The album has 18 tracks made up of contemporary songs, and pop and jazz standards song "bossa" style.

'Kiss Kiss Bang Bang' on DVD

NOW on DVD, "Kiss Kiss Bang Bang" is about a petty thief posing as an actor (**Robert Downey Jr.**). He is thrust into the cutthroat world of Los Angeles' cons, losers and wannabes.

Extra features include a gag reel, theatrical trailer and commentary with Downey and other stars like **Val Kilmer** and **Shane Black**.

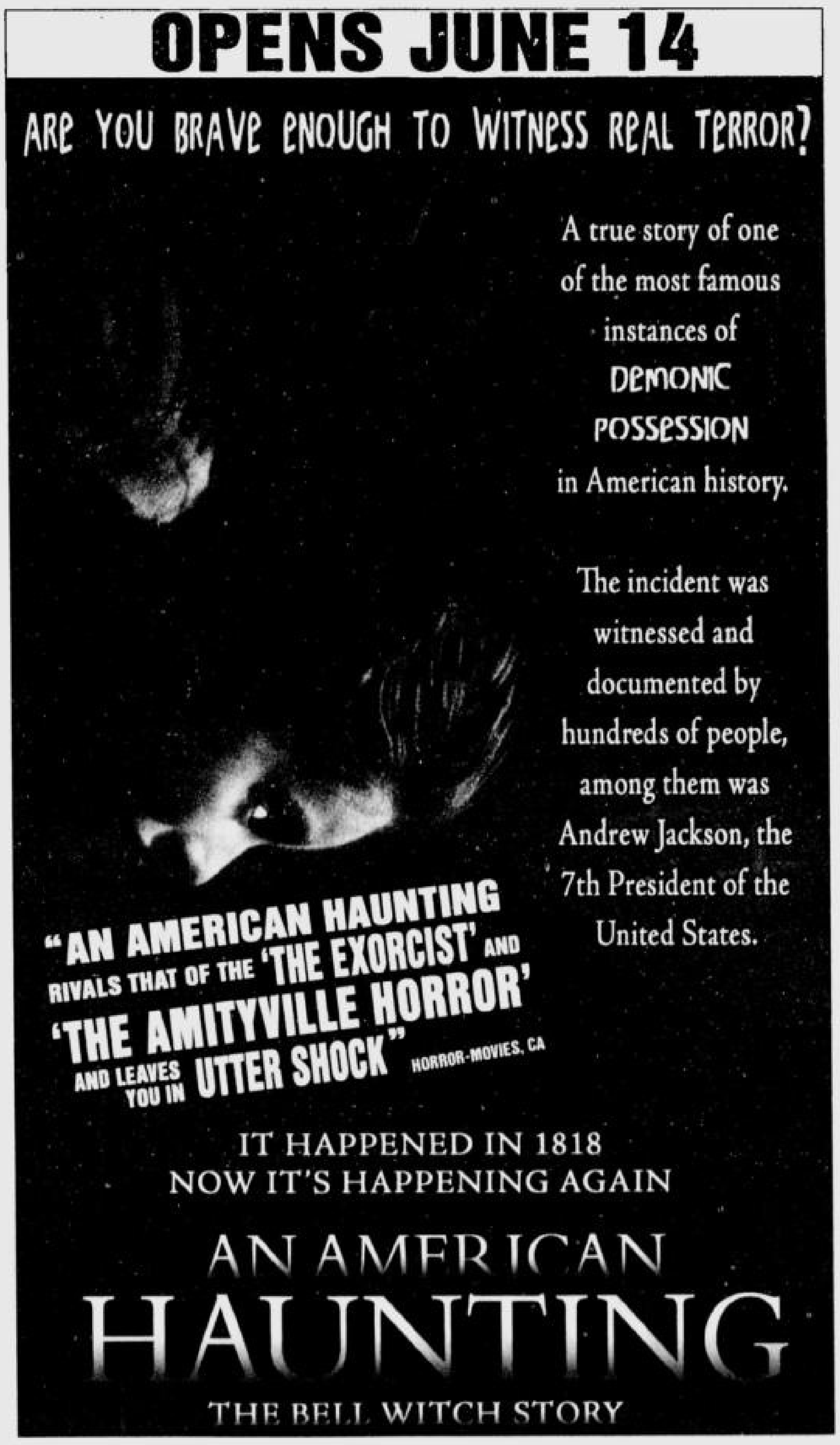
" tracks the
ys Zack and
mom gets a
scale hotel in
of her con-
m to stay in!
mming pool,
nd the twins
ds.

OPENS JUNE 14

Keanu Reeves
Sandra Bullock
THE LAKE HOUSE
How do you hold on to someone you've never met?
WARNER BROS. PICTURES

OPENS JUNE 14

ARE YOU BRAVE ENOUGH TO WITNESS REAL TERROR?



A true story of one of the most famous instances of DEMONIC POSSESSION in American history.

The incident was witnessed and documented by hundreds of people, among them was Andrew Jackson, the 7th President of the United States.

"AN AMERICAN HAUNTING RIVALS THAT OF THE 'THE EXORCIST' AND 'THE AMITYVILLE HORROR' AND LEAVES YOU IN UTTER SHOCK" HORROR-MOVIES.CA

IT HAPPENED IN 1818
NOW IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN

AN AMERICAN HAUNTING
THE BELL WITCH STORY

MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13
Children below 13 yrs. old will be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

OPENS TODAY

DENZEL WASHINGTON
CLIVE OWEN
JODIE FOSTER

INSIDE MAN

IT LOOKED LIKE THE PERFECT BANK ROBBERY. BUT YOU CAN'T JUDGE A CRIME BY ITS COVER.

www.insideman.net

united international pictures

Distributed by Solar Entertainment Corporation

UNIVERSAL

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when you buy a SIM Pack + P150 minimum worth of Prepaid Cards.

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Promo Period: Extended until June 18, 2006
Approved by DTI-NCR

* Movieworld coupon entitles holder to one (1) free movie ticket upon purchase of one (1) regular movie ticket or P50 worth of snacks at the Cinema Snack Express. Coupon valid until August 31, 2006.
** January and February 2006 issues.

The SUN Shop

CINEMAS

MMTA
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MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
8th floor Shangri-la Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Telephone: 633 2227 / 6337851 loc. 171

1 (DOLBY)	X-MEN 3 PG13
2 (DOLBY)	OMEN R13
3 (DOLBY)	TAKE THE LEAD PG13
4 (DOLBY)	TH E INSIDE MAN PG13

PREMIERE

(DOLBY)	THE DA VINCI CODE R18

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	X - MEN - 3
2 (SDDS)	THE DA VINCI CODE
3 (DTS)	ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 GOLD (DTS)	THE OMEN 666
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	CHAOS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	THE BENCHWARMERS
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	THE INSIDE MAN
8	TAKE THE LEAD
9	POSEIDON
10	MANAY PO

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY)	THE OMEN 666
2 (DOLBY)	X - MEN - 3
3 (DOLBY)	THE INSIDE MAN
4 (DOLBY)	TAKE THE LEAD

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	MANAY PO
2 (DTS)	ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 (DOLBY)	X - MEN - 3
4	THE DA VINCI CODE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111146

1	MANAY PO
2 (DOLBY)	THE DA VINCI CODE
3 (DTS)	X - MEN - 3
4	ALL ABOUT LOVE

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	ALL ABOUT LOVE
2	MANAY PO
3 (DOLBY)	THE POSEIDON

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1	MANAY PO
2	ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 (DOLBY)	SILENT HILL
4 (DTS)	X - MEN - 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1	X - MEN - 3
2	MANAY PO
3 (DOLBY)	ALL ABOUT LOVE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1	X - MEN - 3
2	MANAY PO

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216

1	X - MEN - 3
2	THE OMEN 666
3	ALL ABOUT LOVE
4	THE INSIDE MAN

Blue Wave MARQUINTON
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 (DOLBY)	ALL ABOUT LOVE
2 (DOLBY)	MANAY PO
3 (DOLBY)	CARS
4 (DOLBY)	THE OMEN 666

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 (DOLBY)	THE OMEN 666
2	TAKE THE LEAD
3	ALL ABOUT LOVE
4	X - MEN - 3
5	THE INSIDE MAN

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150

3	ALL ABOUT LOVE
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX)	THE DA VINCI CODE
5	MANAY PO

MARKET!MARKET! Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE-3
2	ALL ABOUT LOVE
3	X - MEN - 3
4	RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994

1	MANAY PO
2	ALL ABOUT LOVE
3	THE OMEN 666
4	X - MEN - 3

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1	ALL ABOUT LOVE
2	CHAOS
3	MANAY PO

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1	THE DA VINCI CODE
2	THE OMEN 666

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1	X - MEN - 3
2	ALL ABOUT LOVE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	REINCARNATION
2	X - MEN - 3
3	PLEASE CALL
4 (DTS)	PLEASE CALL

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	OBSESSION
2	ALL ABOUT LOVE
3 (DTS)	X - MEN - 3
4	MANAY PO
5	THE DA VINCI CODE

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan
Telephone No. (044) 600-3025

1☆	X - MEN - 3
2☆	ALL ABOUT LOVE
3☆	MANAY PO

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	X - MEN - 3
2	MANAY PO
3 (DTS ES)	THE OMEN 666
4	ALL ABOUT LOVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	MANAY PO
2	ALL ABOUT LOVE
3	SILENT HILL
4	X - MEN - 3

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

☆	X - MEN - 3
☆	ALL ABOUT LOVE
☆	RESERVED
☆	RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	MANAY PO
2	THE DA VINCI CODE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1	X - MEN - 3
2	PLEASE CALL

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

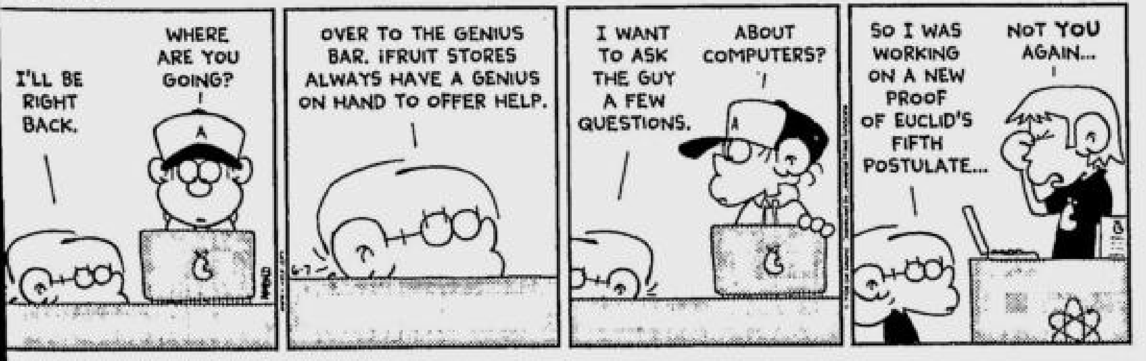
ComicRelief

e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7, 2006

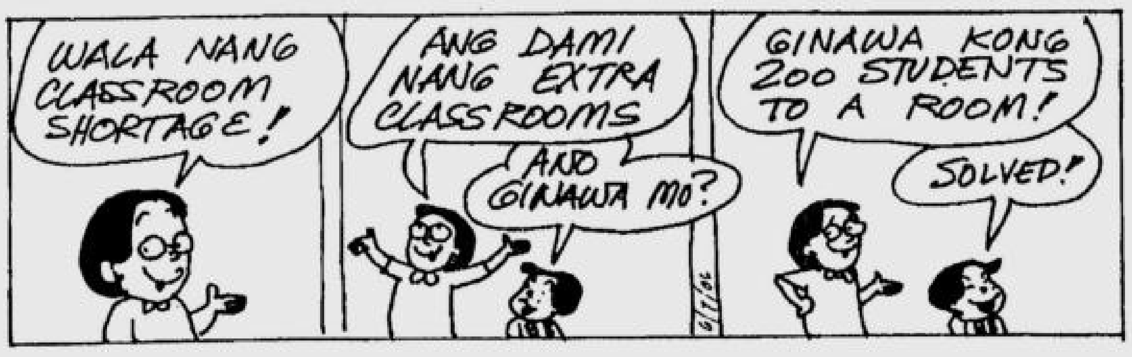
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
OVER TO THE GENIUS BAR. IFRUIT STORES ALWAYS HAVE A GENIUS ON HAND TO OFFER HELP.
I WANT TO ASK THE GUY A FEW QUESTIONS.
ABOUT COMPUTERS?
SO I WAS WORKING ON A NEW PROOF OF EUCLID'S FIFTH POSTULATE...
NOT YOU AGAIN...

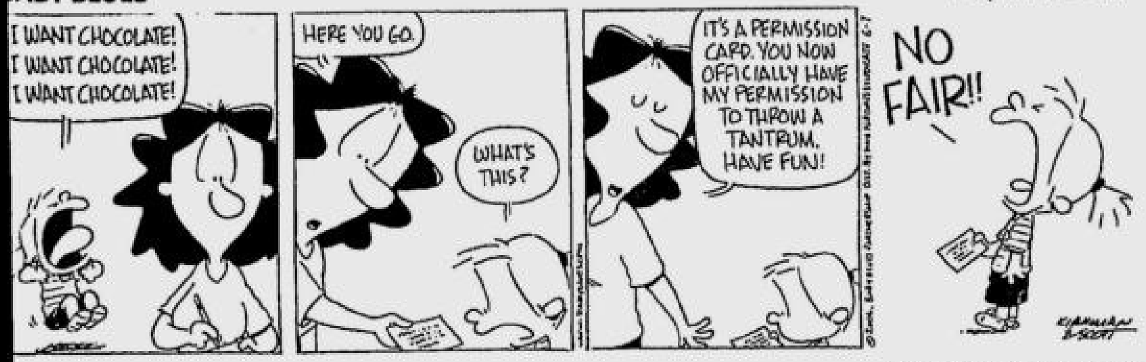
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WALA NANG CLASSROOM SHORTAGE!
ANG DAMI NANG EXTRA CLASSROOMS
ANO GINAWA MO?
GINAWA KONG 200 STUDENTS TO A ROOM!
SOLVED!
6/7/06

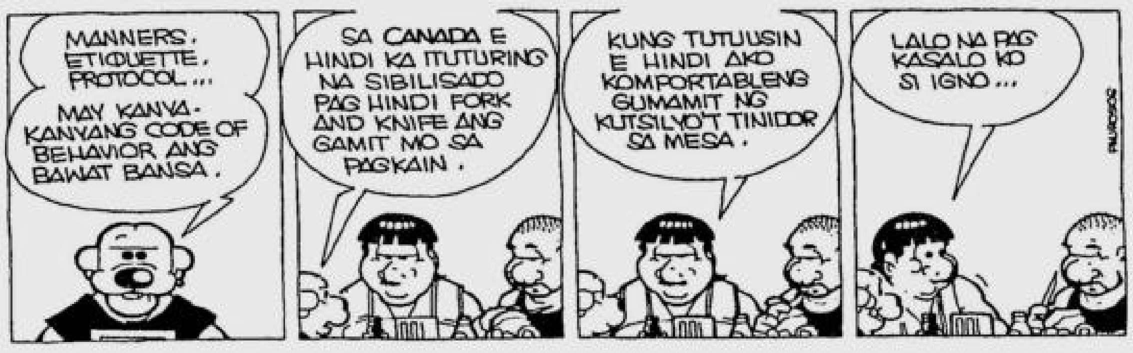
ABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I WANT CHOCOLATE! I WANT CHOCOLATE! I WANT CHOCOLATE!
HERE YOU GO.
WHAT'S THIS?
IT'S A PERMISSION CARD. YOU NOW OFFICIALLY HAVE MY PERMISSION TO THROW A TANTRUM. HAVE FUN!
NO FAIR!!
KIRKMAN SCOTT

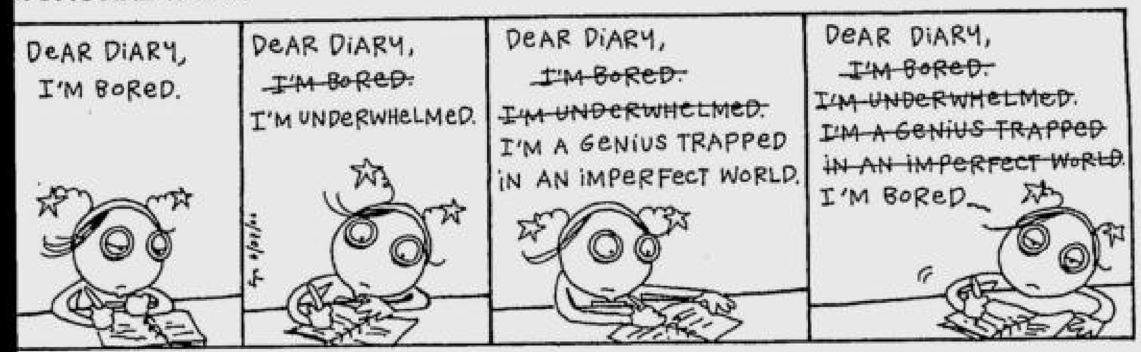
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MANNERS. ETIQUETTE. PROTOCOL...
MAY KANYA-KANYANG CODE OF BEHAVIOR ANG BAWAT BANSA.
SA CANADA E HINDI KA ITUTURING NA SIBILISADO PAG HINDI FORK AND KNIFE ANG GAMIT MO SA PAGKAIN.
KUNG TUTUUSIN E HINDI AKO KOMPORTABLENG GUMAMIT NG KUTSILYO'T TINIDOR SA MESA.
LALO NA PAG KASALO KO SI IGNO...

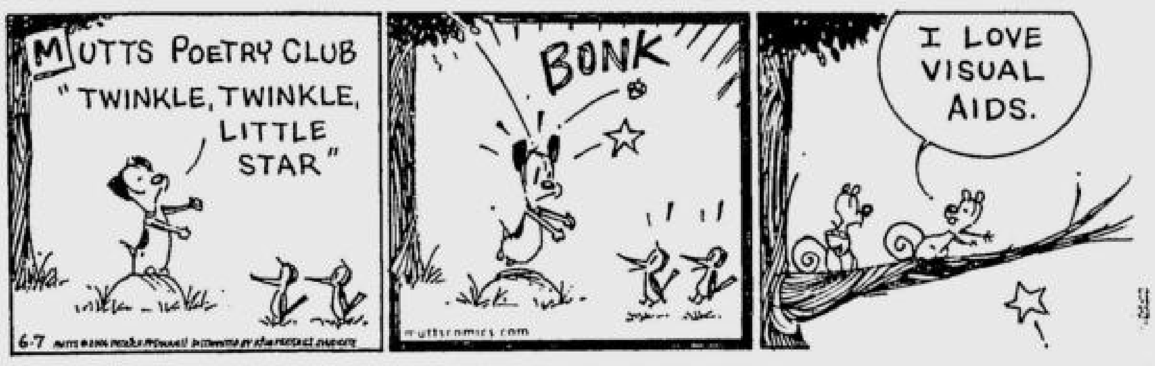
TOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


DEAR DIARY, I'M BORED.
DEAR DIARY, ~~I'M BORED.~~ I'M UNDERWHELMED.
DEAR DIARY, ~~I'M BORED.~~ ~~I'M UNDERWHELMED.~~ I'M A GENIUS TRAPPED IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD.
DEAR DIARY, ~~I'M BORED.~~ ~~I'M UNDERWHELMED.~~ ~~I'M A GENIUS TRAPPED IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD.~~ I'M BORED

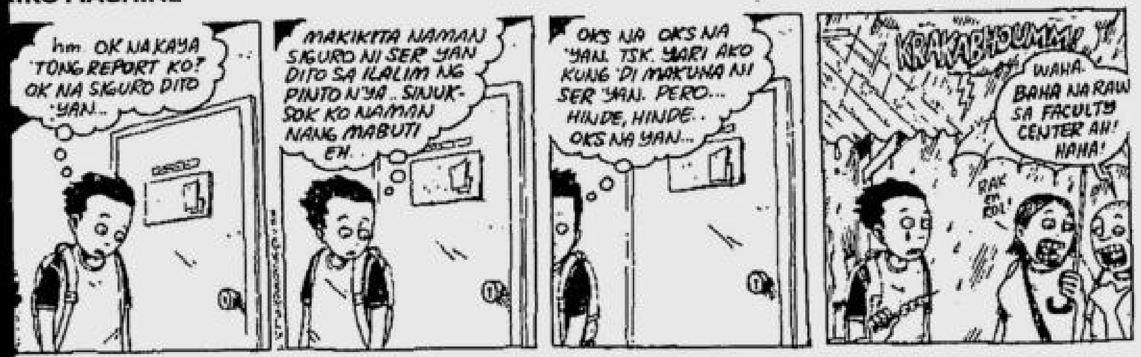
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


MUTTS POETRY CLUB
"TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR"
BONK
I LOVE VISUAL AIDS.
6-7
muttscomics.com

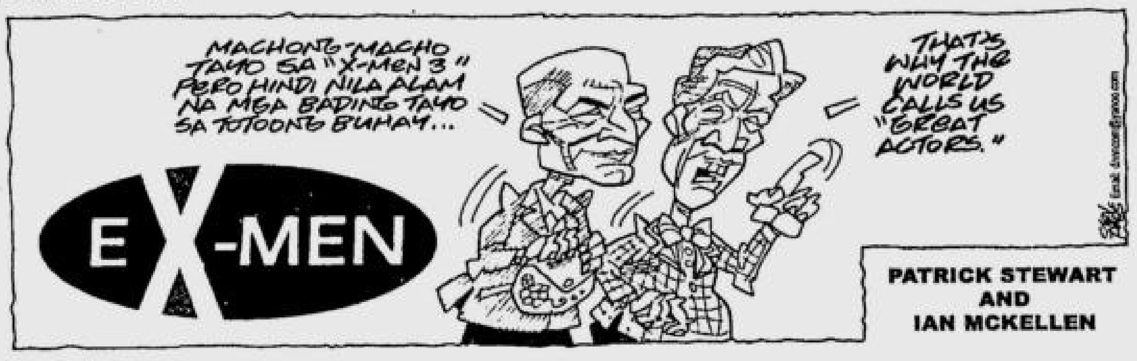
IKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


hm. OK NA KAYA 'TONG REPORT KO? OK NA SIGURO DITO 'YAN...
MAKIKITA NAMAN SIGURO NI SER 'YAN DITO SA ILALIM NG PINTO N'YA.. SINUKSOK KO NAMAN NANG MABUTI EH..
OKS NA OKS NA 'YAN. TSK. YARI AKO KUNG 'DI MAKUHA NI SER 'YAN. PERO... HINDE, HINDE.. OKS NA YAN...
KRAKABHOUMM!
WAHA. BAHA NA RAW SA FACULTY CENTER AH! HAHA!
RAK EN ROL!

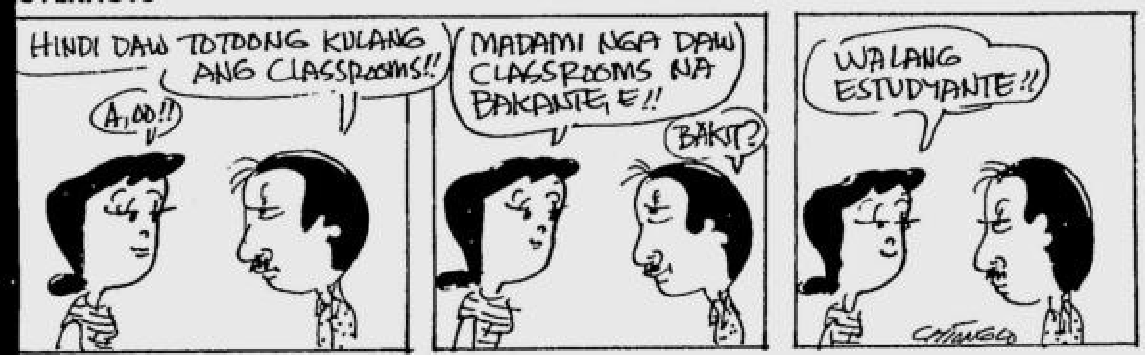
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


MACHONG-MACHO TAYO SA "X-MEN 3" PERO HINDI NILA ALAM NA MGA BADING TAYO SA TOTOONG BUHAY...
THAT'S WHY THE WORLD CALLS US "GREAT ACTORS."
EX-MEN
PATRICK STEWART AND IAN MCKELLEN

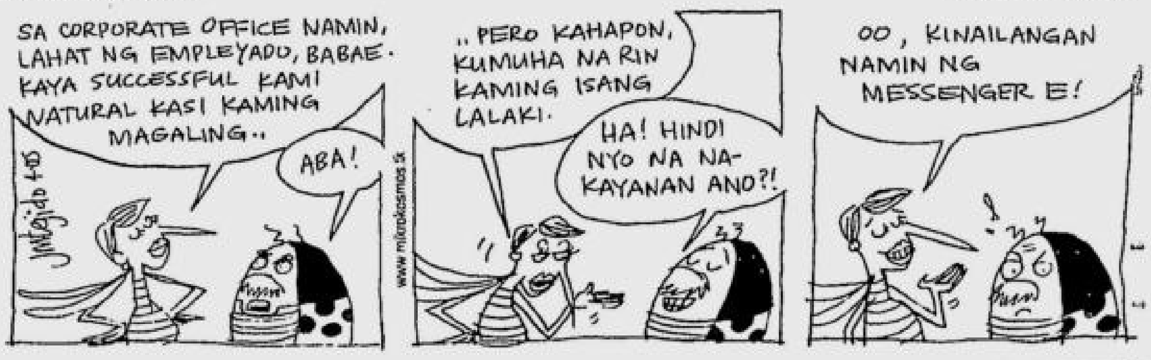
OVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HINDI DAW TOTOONG KULANG ANG CLASSROOMS!!
A, OO!!
MADAMI NGA DAW CLASSROOMS NA BAKANTE, E!!
BAKIT?
WALANG ESTUDYANTE!!
CHIONGLO

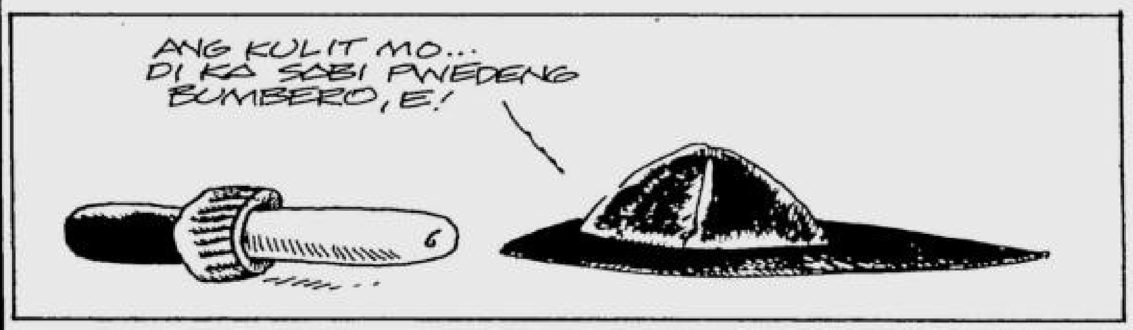
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


SA CORPORATE OFFICE NAMIN, LAHAT NG EMPLEYADO, BABAE. KAYA SUCCESSFUL KAMI NATURAL KASI KAMING MAGALING..
ABA!
.. PERO KAHAPON, KUMUHA NA RIN KAMING ISANG LALAKI.
HA! HINDI NYO NA NAKAYANAN ANO?!
OO, KINAILANGAN NAMIN NG MESSENGER E!
www.mikrokosmos.sk

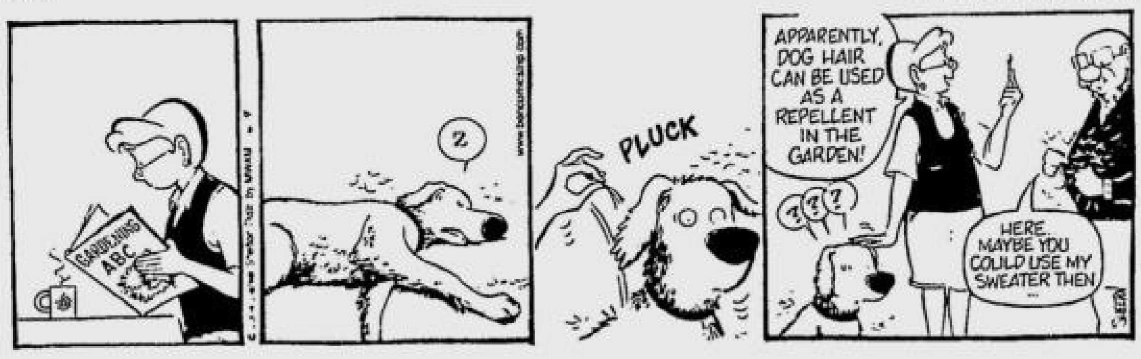
ULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG KULIT MO... DI KA SABI PWEDENG BUMBERO, E!

BEN

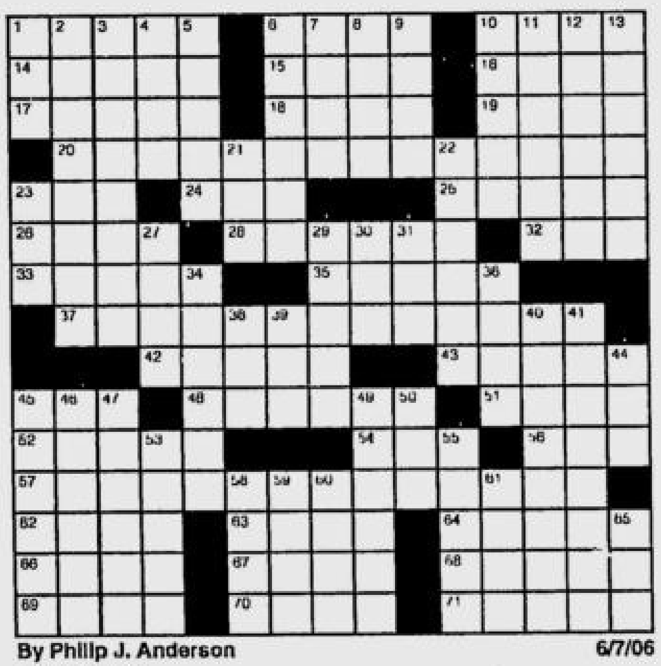
BY DANIEL SHELTON


GARDENING ABC
Z
PLUCK
APPARENTLY, DOG HAIR CAN BE USED AS A REPELLENT IN THE GARDEN!
???
HERE. MAYBE YOU COULD USE MY SWEATER THEN
www.bencomicstrip.com

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Gallico novel, "Mrs. __ Goes to Paris"
6 Landed
10 Chest muscles, briefly
14 Indigent
15 Company emblem
16 Future DA's exam
17 Fury
18 Clumsy clod
19 Farm measure
20 Delay, in a way
23 Kettle and Barker
24 Kitchen utensil
25 Drive back
26 Play parts
28 "Moonlight __"
32 Pierre's summer
33 Keats and Yeats
35 Time for a shower?
37 Delay, in a way
42 Deli lure
43 Rock
45 Beast of burden
48 Mature ones
51 Cogito __ sum
52 Grip of the hand
54 Goddess of the dawn
56 Metallic element
57 Delay, in a way
62 Gumbo veggie
63 Carpenter's file
64 First sign of the zodiac
66 With no ice
67 Comic Johnson
68 Surgical beam
69 Latin being
70 Equal
71 January in Juarez

DOWN
1 Gasteyer of SNL
2 Burt Reynolds movie
3 Sign up (for)
4 Concept in Cannes
5 Pancake topper
6 Unpigmented
7 Diving bird
8 Stravinsky or Sikorsky
9 Raced
10 Metal coat
11 Get away
12 Floor covering
13 Addison's partner
21 Pops
22 Empties
23 Cartologist's product
27 Greek portico
29 Like a twangy voice
30 Well-suited
31 Dent starter?
34 Bit of trouble
36 Running behind
38 Fishing pole
39 __ Darya River
40 Fabled racer
41 Railroad man
44 Forever and a day
45 Moss Hart's autobiography
46 Quenches
47 Native-born Israelis
49 Short fuse
50 Great Lakes canals
53 Roofing stone
55 Trite
58 Greenside hazard
59 Loser to 40D
60 Italian noble family
61 Tehran's land
65 Full-house letters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By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

6/7/06

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

T	O	M		S	H	A	V	E		S	T	A	M	P
O	R	A		H	E	L	I	X		C	O	C	O	A
W	I	N	W	I	N	S	I	T	U	A	T	I	O	N
A	G	A	I	N				E	N	D	E	D		
R	I	N	G		S	P	I	N	E	S		T	A	B
D	N	A		P	O	U	N	D			P	E	R	U
			B	U	R	N	T		C	O	R	S	E	T
	P	L	A	C	E	Y	O	U	R	B	E	T	S	
C	L	E	R	K	S		T	R	E	E	S			
P	O	T	S			S	A	L	T	Y		B	L	T
A	D	S		O	H	E	L	S	F		A	R	E	A
		D	O	T	E	D				O	N	E	A	L
S	H	O	W	T	O	A	D	V	A	N	T	A	G	E
H	O	W	I	E		T	E	A	S	E		S	U	N
O	W	N	E	R		E	N	N	I	S		T	E	T

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6/7/06

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're creative, entertaining and charming. People enjoy being in your company. In turn, you know how to please them because you have your finger on the pulse of the public. You understand trends and society. You're earthy and sensuous (and sometimes shocking). You're very loyal to loved ones. In the year ahead, an important choice will arise. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Prince, musical artist; Liam Neeson, actor; Anna Kournikova, tennis player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be clear in all your communications with others. Siblings and relatives play an increased role in your life right now. Casual daily conversations are important.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good time for you to sort out your possessions and establish what you want to keep and what you want to pass on. It's not good to own stuff you don't even know you have!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): With the Sun in your sign now, it's your turn to recharge your batteries for the rest of the year. It's totally appropriate to put yourself first now. Take care of Numero Uno.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Work alone as much as possible right now. Solitude will benefit you. You also need some private thinking time to sort things out.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Friendships and your participation in clubs, groups and organizations are important now. Talk to others about your hopes and dreams for the future.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): All your interactions with bosses, VIPs and parents are particularly important now. Don't worry. People easily respect you. (And you don't even have to do anything extra-special!)

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Get serious about making travel plans. You want to expand your world in some way. You might also want a sign-up for a course or learn a new language.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): By nature, you are a passionate person. This month you're especially ardent. Even the most casual conversation seems to take on a profound meaning.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Partnerships and close friendships are important now because they can teach you a lot about yourself. Observe yourself in all your interactions with others.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You have a strong urge to get organized, both at work and at home. Make the most of this! Use this energy to get a lot done

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Love affairs, romance and parties are on your menu now. You want to have a good time. Some of you will also enjoy playful activities with children.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Home, family and domestic issues are important now. Spend more time with family members. Work on creating a home that makes you feel truly comfortable.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

1			2		8	5		3
		7						
6				1			4	
9			6		3			1
		3				9		
2			4		5			6
	9			3				2
						1		
3		6	5		7			4

Difficulty Level ★★★

6/07

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	6	9	4	1	7	2	3	8
3	1	2	9	6	8	5	4	7
4	7	8	5	2	3	9	6	1
7	9	5	6	8	2	4	1	3
1	3	6	7	5	4	8	2	9
2	8	4	1	3	9	7	5	6
8	2	7	3	4	1	6	9	5
9	5	3	2	7	6	1	8	4
6	4	1	8	9	5	3	7	2

Difficulty Level ★★

Truefaith, dongabay have new albums

DONG Abay

SPIN CITY

DONG ABAY, FORMER Yano and Pan front man whose new band is named, uh... dongabay, rocks anew with the release of his new album, "Filipino."

Abay wrote all 14 original tracks—in Filipino.

He explains: "I played with the language here. After all, language is very much like music—one can play with the sound, stretch it, expand it, shrink or tighten it. That's the idea."

Dong said "Filipino" took more than two months to make. One of his mentors at UP, Robin Rivera, produced the album; pals Buddy Zabala and Raimund Marasigan played bass and drums on all the tracks, with Vinty Lava on guitars. Sound engineer was Shinji Tanaka of Sound Creation Studio.

"Filipino" is now available at all record shops. From Synergy Records.

Finishing touches

After a two-year absence from the recording scene, the band Truefaith—led by Medwin Marfil, with Kenneth Ilagan and Eugene Marfil on guitars, Bimbo Yance on bass, Jake Lumacad on keyboards and Benedict Esguerra on drums—is now putting the finishing touches to its much-awaited 11th album entitled "Stray To Be Found" (EMI).

Fans who can't wait can check out the video for the first single off the album, "Dahil Ikaw" (love theme from the teleserye, "Sa Piling Mo") on www.truefaith.com.ph.

TRUE Faith

ARANETA CENTER

Gateway Ali MALL FarmersPlaza

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TAKE THE LEAD 1:00 / 3:50 / 6:40 / 9:30	INSIDE MAN 1:15 / 4:00 / 6:45 / 9:30	OMEN 666 12:00 / 2:30 / 5:00 / 7:30 / 10:00	Globe PLATINUM CINEMA
ALL ABOUT LOVE 12:10 / 2:35 / 5:00 / 7:25 / 9:50	MANAY PO 12:40 / 2:55 / 5:10 / 7:25 / 9:40	THE DA VINCI CODE 12:30 / 3:40 / 6:50 / 10:00	
BENCH WARMERS 12:25 / 2:20 / 4:15 / 6:10 / 8:05 / 10:00	OVER THE HEDGE 1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 FAILURE TO LAUNCH 7:15 / 9:30	X-MEN 3 12:40 / 3:00 / 5:20 / 7:40 / 10:00	OMEN 666 1:55 / 4:25 / 6:55 / 9:25

Ali MALL CINEMAS

1	OMEN 666 12:55 / 3:25 / 5:55 / 8:25	2	THE DA VINCI CODE 12:05 / 3:00 / 5:55 / 8:50	3	X-MEN 3 12:15 / 2:25 / 4:35 / 6:45 / 8:55
4	TAKE THE LEAD 12:15 / 3:05 / 5:55 / 8:45	5	ALL ABOUT LOVE 12:10 R5 / 1:15 / 3:40 / 6:05 / 8:30		

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in the year 2 06
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THE OMEN

6.6.06

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX PRESENTS A JOHN MOORE FILM "THE OMEN" JULIA STILES LIEV SCHREIBER MIA FARROW DAVID THEWLIS PETE POSTLETHWAITE MICHAEL GAMBON SEAMUS DAVEY-FITZPATRICK MARCO BELTRAMI DAN ZIMMERMAN PATRICK LUMB JONATHAN SELA JEFFREY STOTT GLENN WILLIAMSON JOHN MOORE DAVID SELTZER JOHN MOORE

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE OMEN	2 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	3 MANAY PO	4 ALL ABOUT LOVE	
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 THE OMEN	2 THE DA VINCI CODE	3 THX INSIDE MAN GUARANTEED SEATS		
	4 THE BENCHWARMERS	5 FAILURE TO LAUNCH	6 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	7 TAKE THE LEAD	
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	2 THE OMEN			
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE OMEN GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX X-MEN: THE LAST STAND GUARANTEED SEATS			
	3 FAILURE TO LAUNCH GUARANTEED SEATS	4 TAKE THE LEAD GUARANTEED SEATS	5 INSIDE MAN GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE OMEN	2 INSIDE MAN			
	3 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	4 TAKE THE LEAD	5 THE BENCHWARMERS		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE OMEN	2 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND	3 FAILURE TO LAUNCH	4 AQUAMARINE	
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE OMEN	2 ALL ABOUT LOVE			
	3 TAKE THE LEAD	4 INSIDE MAN	5 X-MEN: THE LAST STAND		

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GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
BPI Techno Installment Madness June 7 to 18, 2006	5th ATC Taekwondo Invitational June 10 & 11, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Y SPEAK June 10, 2006	Alaska Yamoo: The Super Good Drink for Super Good Kids! June 12, 2006

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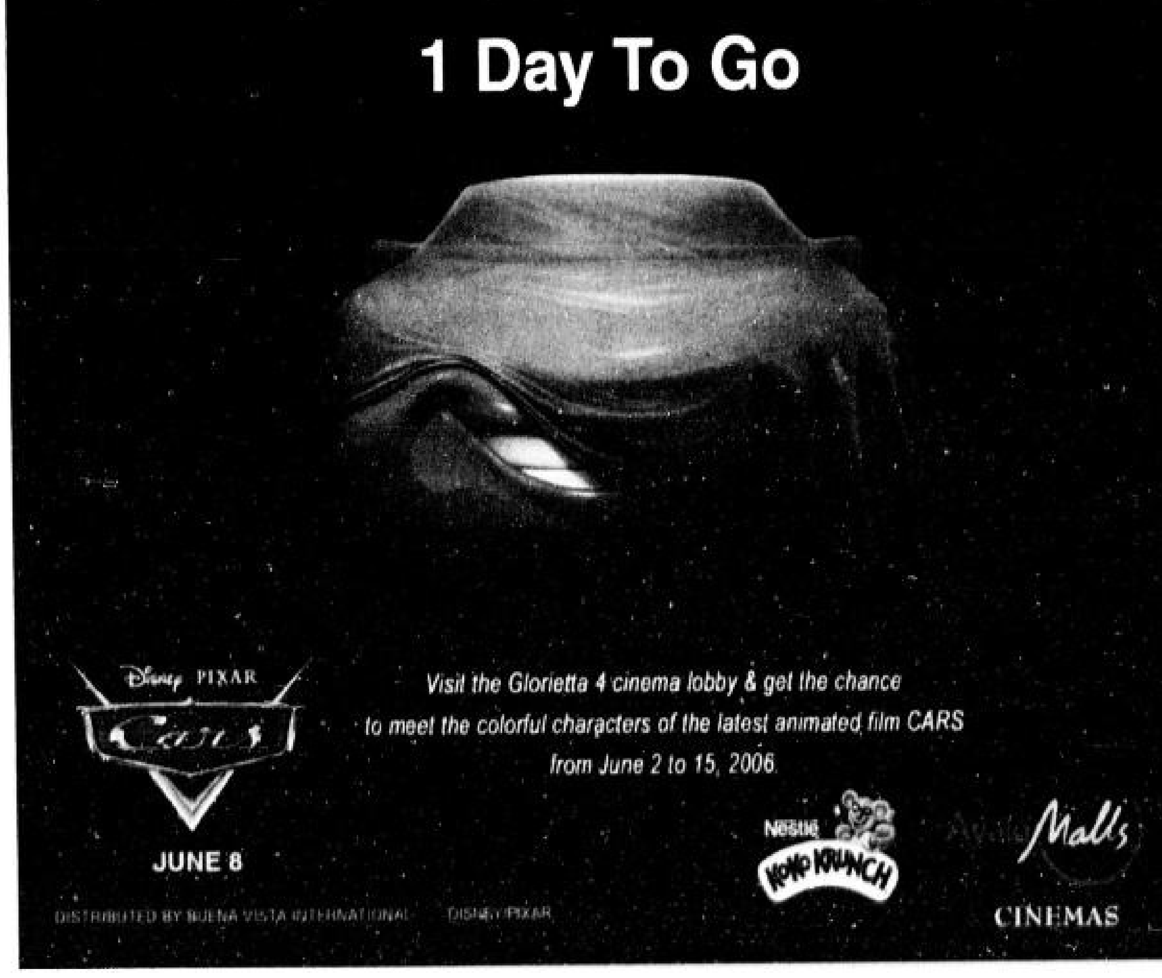

1 Day To Go

Disney PIXAR Cars JUNE 8

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from June 2 to 15, 2006.

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June 2 to 4
Glorietta Activity Center

June 16 to 18
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June 23 to 25
Alabang Town Center

Presented by: SAMSUNG PUNCHOUT
Co-Presented by: Champion

ENTERTAINMENT

RUSHES

If the shoe doesn't fit...

PIOLO stars in 15-minute indie.

CHARLENE was the guest at Ricky Reyes' MoA branch opening.

DIRECTOR CESAR HERNANDO had soldier's shoes waiting for matinee idol Piolo Pascual, lead star in the 15-minute indie film "Kagat ng Dilim." The shoes didn't fit.

Hernando recalls, "Piolo had to wear someone else's shoes. He didn't mind."

Fifteen minutes *lang naman e.*

First mall salon

DID you know that Ricky Reyes set up the first-ever beauty salon in a mall (SM North Edsa, 1985)? Twenty years later, he's still at it. The 38th and 39th RR branches opened recently at SM Clark and SM Mall of Asia. Charlene Gonzalez and Marc Nelson were guests of honor at the MoA branch opening.

Why not Gloria Romero, *ang magandang lolah*?

'Jewel-ed' Asiana

TV'S FAVORITE *koreanovela* is now on Asiana Airlines B767 aircraft (see photo). The plane flies Asian routes including the Philippines. Now airing its last few episodes, "Jewel in the Palace" has become a global record-breaking mini-series for Korea's MBC TV.

It's the journey

DIRECTOR John Lasseter on "Cars," his latest: "It's about a character who who learns that, in life, the journey is its own reward."

Dead Grateful

LOS ANGELES—Vince Welnick, the Grateful Dead's last keyboard player and a veteran musician of several other bands, including the Tubes and Missing Man Formation, has died, the Grateful Dead's longtime publicist said. He was believed to be 55. The group said in a statement on its Web site. "May the four winds blow him safely home." *AP*

Psychic duped

CHICAGO—Uri Geller's dream of turning the first home Elvis Presley owned into a museum dedicated to the paranormal has been dealt a setback nearly as bizarre as the spoon-bending trick that made the Israeli-born psychic famous.

Geller, who thought he had purchased the Memphis property in an eBay auction last month for $905,100, learned on Friday the sellers had turned around and sold the 280-sqm house to a foundation set up by Mike Curb, the longtime music producer. *Reuters*

아시아나 大長今 호
MBC
HL7514
"JEWEL in the Palace" soars off the charts and up in Asian skies.

GO, *'LO*! The Four Aces, recent RP visitors, in action at the Araneta Coliseum, from left: "Funny man" Joe Giglio (for giggles?), the quiet one Harry Heisler, audience favorite Fred Diodati, and Frank Sinatra impersonator Joe Amato.

PHOTOS BY RODEL ROTONI

He's alive?

SYDNEY—Mystery surrounding the disappearance of Australian entertainer Olivia Newton-John's longtime boyfriend Patrick McDermott deepened Monday following a report he was alive and living in Mexico.

McDermott, who had been Newton-John's partner for nine years, disappeared off a boat while on an overnight fishing trip off the California coast a year ago. His body has never been found and authorities have not determined whether the 48-year-old walked off the boat when it docked back at San Pedro, was murdered at sea or faked his death to escape mounting debts. *AFP*

'Break-Up' on top

LOS ANGELES—Fueled by real-life romantic splits and hookups, Jennifer Aniston and Vince Vaughn's "The Break-Up" pulled an upset over the mutant world of the "X-Men." "The Break-Up" debuted more strongly than expected with $38.1 million to take over as the No. 1 weekend movie from "X-Men: The Last Stand," which slipped to second place with $34.35 million, according to studio estimates Sunday.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at US and Canadian theaters, according to Exhibitor Relations, official trackers:

1) "The Break-Up,"$38.1M; 2) "X-Men: The Last Stand," $34.35M: 3) "Over the Hedge," $20.6M; 4) "The Da Vinci Code," $19.3M; 5) "Mission: Impossible III," $4.67M; 6) "Poseidon," $3.4M; 7) "RV," $3.3M; 8) "See No Evil," $2M; 9) "An Inconvenient Truth," $1.33M; 10) "Just My Luck," $825,000. *AP*

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TV GUIDE

Wednesday, June 7, 2006

Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network

American Idol

Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm

ABC Iba Tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	PBA				Sentro	PBA					Big News	American Idol			
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Calla Lily	TV Patrol World		Bituing Walang Ningning	Sa Piling Mo	Pinoy Big Brother	My Girl	Wonderful Life	S.O.C.O			Insider
AXN		CSI: Miami		CSI: NY (Season I)		Guinness World Records: 50 Years, 50 Records		Beastmaster (Season I)		Pensacola (Season III)		30 Seconds To Fame	Samsung Sports World	Maximum Exposure (Season I)		CSI: Crime Scene Investigation (Season 6)		CSI: Miami (Season II)	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy - Double Episodes		The Simpsons - Double Episodes		Power Rangers Ninja Storm	PokeMon	Dice	Gundam Seed Destiny	The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Ang Dayuhan				[illegible] Ka				La Vida Rosa			Persona	Bituing Walang Ningning				Hati Tayo Sa Magdamag	
Cinemax		Roustabout (3:10 PM)				Terror On Track 9 (4:50 PM)			Buffalo Soldiers (6:25 PM)			Premonition			Cat People			Philadelphia (11:15PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Cold Case		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	I, Detective	Law & Order		Law & Order Special Victims Unit						Bones	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-[illegible] Bunny	Sabrina, The Animated Series	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			American Dragon	Buzz on Maggie	Kim Possible	Totally Spies	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ETC		America's Next Top Model 4		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Veronica Mars 2		Beach Girls		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr. Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Cold Turkey		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	St. Thomas More Faithful Statesman	Chaplet Of Mercy/ Angelus	Faith In Motion	Truth In The Heart	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Suffering And The Love Of God	EWTN Catholic Classic	The Church & The Poor: Building Bridges	Mother Angelica Live Classics		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/ Angelus	One In Their Roots: Holiness Of Priesthood	Parable	Rome Reports	Special Programming	
Fox News		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live					
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat (2:45 PM)	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Endless Love 1: Autumn In My Heart By Popular Demand		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Captain Barbell	Majika	I Luv NY	Love Of The Condor Heroes	Jewel In The Palace		Nuts Entertainment			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters V		Last Call (4:05 PM)				Bewitched	The Nanny	Judging Amy		Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye III		Judging Amy		To The Ends Of The Earth			Judging Amy (11:45PM)
HBO					The Natural					Assassins (6:55 PM)				Harry Potter And The Prisoner Of Azkaban					The River Wild (11:20PM)
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Angelic Layer	Tokyo Underground	Metal Fighter Miku	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Angelic Layer
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	TV Infomercial		Japan Video Topics/ Arirang		ME TV		Global Family Series	BYK 101	Up Close And Personal	IBC News Tonite	Breaking Barriers	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Heat		Velocity		X-Men	Street Smarts	Mad TV		That 70s Show	My Name Is Earl	The Late Show David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Premium Blend	Primetime Glick	Chappelle Show
Lifestyle Network		30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	Smart Solutions	Sensible Chic	Decorating Cents	Iron Chef America		Food 911	E! Entertainment Special		Living Space	Martha		Fine Living Special		Intimate Portrait	
MTV Philippines					Pop Inc	MTV Hits (with SMS)				Get Spotted				TRL					
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXLOG	MYX Firsts	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		MYX Live!		Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXLOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	National Geographic Specials		Journey into Amazonia		Totally Wild Vampire Bats	Planet Wild S1- Go Islands	Top 5 - World of Reptiles		WOW! Wild Sex: Deviants?		About Asia		National Geographic Specials		Seconds From Disaster: Crash Of The Concorde		Is It Real? UFOs	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Atbp.			Dyaryo Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Siya?	Teledyaryo W/ [illegible] & Angelique Lazo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				Bantay OCW With Susan K	
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Langis At Tubig				Pangako				[illegible] Kong Pangako				Kilabot At Kembot				[illegible]
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Scrapped Princess	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Magic Ring	Irene	Noel	Project 11	Now Na!		News On Q	Balikbayan		Irene	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	NBA Semis/ Conference Finals						Newswatch Now	Cargo For Truth		Kerygma
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports						Phil 9-Ball Open Day1				Sagupaan	NBA Jam	NBA Greatest Game: Lakers vs. Knicks G7 70				OverTime Chamberlain	Solar Sports Desk	2006 Hitachi Asian Women's Club	
Sports Plus			Golf Today	FIFA Preview Series V	Gillette World Cup Preview 7	French Open '06 Day10 Highlights		French Open '06 Day 11 Official Ladies Singles											
Star Movies	Class Action (2:22 PM)			The Legend Of Johnny Lingo				The Truth About Love (5:50 PM)			Retroactive (7:25 PM)			Walking Tall (2004)			A View To A Kill		
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Beauty & The Geek		Beauty & The Geek: Boston Legal		The Apprentice		Seinfeld	Beauty & The Geek
Studio 23	Bewitched	YuGi Oh 3 & 4				Batman Beyond	Xiaolin Showdown	Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	World's Craziest Videos		CSI (8:20 PM)	24 Season 4 (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Just Shoot Me

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BUSINESS

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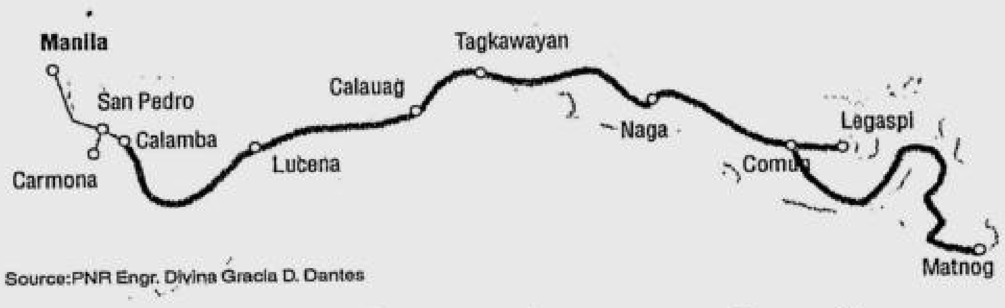
Proposed South Rail project

The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog he quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog he quick brown fox jumps



Source:PNR Engr. Divina Gracia D. Dantes

Neda go-ahead sought for $700-M South Rail project

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT HAS sought the approval of the National Economic and Development Authority for the proposed South Rail project that will link Metro Manila to Bicol through high-speed train service.

In an interview, Transportation Undersecretary Guiling A. Mamondiong said his office was now waiting for the go-ahead from the Neda's Investment Coordination Committee before proceeding with negotiations with the Chinese government for the project's funding.

"This whole project will cost up to $700 million," he said. "[The Chinese government] has offered to help fund it."

He said the deal with the Chinese was similar to that signed for the $503-million North Rail program—a controversial project roundly criticized for allegedly being overpriced—which was also supported by the People's Republic of China.

The government has yet to determine whether China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. (CNMEG), the main North Rail contractor, would also be involved in the South Rail program.

As early as last year, CNMEG has expressed its interest to take part in the South Rail project, despite an earlier agreement between the Philippine government and a Korean contractor.

"This will be a 500-kilometer project [extending] from Calamba, Laguna to Bicol," Mamondiong pointed out, explaining why it was expected to be more expensive that the North Rail program.

Unlike the North Rail, however, which involved the construction of new facilities, the DOTC official said the South Rail project would mainly involve the rehabilitation of existing facilities like the train tracks currently being used by the Philippine National Railways.

Apart from the infrastructure, the train tracks will be reconfigured to be able to handle high-speed trains.

"We are still studying which is the best," he added, referring to the kinds of train systems and infrastructure the project will have, although they are likely to be sourced from China if a funding agreement is finalized between both countries.

Mamondiong, who oversees the government's rail projects, said construction of the South Rail would start next year after all approvals shall have been secured and will take anywhere from four to five years finish.

NEDA/ B2

Inflation slows to 6.9%

Strong peso tempers rise in basic prices in May

By Michelle V. Remo

INFLATION EASED FURTHER TO 6.9 PERCENT year-on-year in May, the lowest in four months, as the stronger peso helped temper the effects of the higher value-added tax on prices of consumer products.

The latest inflation rate, which beat the forecast made by the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), was a deceleration from the 7.1 percent in April and the 7.6 percent in February and March.

It also brought the average inflation rate for the first five months of the year to 7.2 percent.

In May last year, inflation stood at 8.5 percent.

"This is better than our expectations. This will help us meet, if not surpass, our inflation target for the full year of 7.3 to 7.9 percent," said Dennis Arroyo, Neda director for policy and planning.

The Neda earlier projected that inflation in May likely settled at between 7 and 7.3 percent.

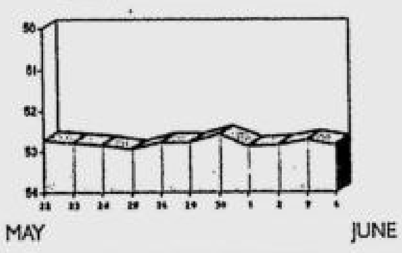
The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that prices of nearly all commodity groups, except for clothing and services, increased at a slower rate than the previous months. Only clothing and services failed to register a decelerated inflation rate.

The NSO said the inflation rate for products belonging to the food, beverage and tobacco group stood at 5.9 percent in May, down from 6.1 percent in April. Prices of housing and repair items rose an average 4 percent, also slower than the 4.2 percent the month before; fuel, light and water, to 13.4 percent from 15.9 percent, and miscellaneous

INFLATION/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱52.84 = $1

As of 5 p.m., June 6, 2006

¥112.22 = $1

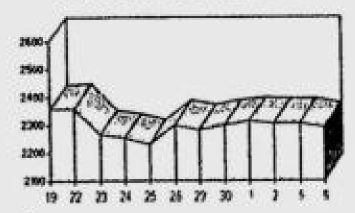
As of 5 p.m., June 6, 2006

GOLD: $632.30-632.80

per ounce Hong Kong, June 6, 2006

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.63 PERCENT lower yesterday following Wall Street's sharp overnight retreat but some selective bargain-hunting in late trade limited the downside, dealers said.

They said sentiment got a jolt from the

SHARES/ B4

WHAT'S INSIDE

JP Morgan downgrades RP rating /B2

BSP expected to keep policy rates unchanged /B4

Peso stumbles anew on threat of Fed hike /B10

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JP Morgan downgrades RP rating

Bank's debt assessment revised to 'neutral' from 'overweight'

By Michelle V. Remo

INVESTMENT BANK JP MORGAN HAS downgraded its assessment of the Philippines' debt paper from "overweight" to "neutral," as it expressed concern over the Bureau of Internal Revenue's admission that it would miss its collection target for the year.

A "neutral" rating means that the bank has recommended that investors hold off plans to buy or sell bonds issued by the Philippine government.

An "overweight" assessment, on the other hand, means that it recommends investors to buy Republic of the Philippines bonds.

JP Morgan hinted that the BIR's statement cast doubts on the government's ability to meet its fiscal targets for the year, including an improvement of the country's revenue effort from 14.7 percent of gross domestic product last year to 16 percent this year.

Revenue effort, a ratio between the government's total revenue collection and the country's gross domestic product, measures the government's ability to collect additional revenues from an increase in economic activity.

The bank projected that with the BIR's own estimates of a "realistic" tax collection this year, the country would only post a revenue effort of 14.8 percent.

"This recent piece of news underscores the risk of disappointment. We thus maintain the view that the ROPs continue to be a trading credit rather than a fundamental credit turnaround story," JP Morgan said in its report on the Philippines.

The BIR, which accounts for about 60 percent of the national government's revenues, earlier asked the Department of Finance, its head agency, to lower its tax collection target for this year from the programmed P675.4 billion to only P601.4 billion.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag said the target assigned to the agency was "unreasonably high," given that the revenue agency's actual tax collection last year stood at only P542 billion.

The BIR said a 26-percent year-on-year growth target was too high. An 11-percent growth goal was more realistic, it said.

The BIR said P27 billion of its target for this year should be transferred to the Bureau of Customs, which has the potential to collect more value-added taxes on oil given high import volumes.

It added that the decision of the Bureau of the Treasury to reduce issuance of Treasury bills and bonds would result in lower collection of documentary stamp tax on government securities.

The Department of Finance said the BIR's plea would be up for discussion this month, but Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that as of now, the DOF does not see any reason to cut the BIR's target.

Angara pushes passage of biofuels bill

By Abigail L. Ho

SEN. EDGARDO ANGARA IS PUSHING FOR the immediate passage of the pending biofuels bill saying that it would help the country achieve energy independence.

In a speech before his colleagues in the Senate, he said the country's "over-dependence" on imported oil was not only boosting its foreign exchange requirements, but also exposing it to supply and price volatility.

He noted that the country imported more than 94 percent of its annual oil requirements, making it vulnerable to price spikes.

Also, every $1 a barrel increase in international oil prices resulted in $1.26 million in additional foreign exchange requirements for the country.

Last year, he said the country consumed 298.8 thousand barrels of oil a day, or 108.7 million barrels of oil.

Oil also accounted for 52.2 percent of total energy supply, followed by geothermal at 21.1 percent, biomass at 16.8 percent and natural gas at 4 percent, he said.

"But (coco methyl ester) and ethanol accounted for only 0.6 percent, and other forms of renewable energy like solar, wind and hydroelectric just 0.2 percent. That shows that there is much potential in renewable sources of energy," he said.

He said the passage of the Biofuels Bill would pave the way for the increased use of CME for diesel and ethanol for gasoline as it would make the use of these alternative fuels mandatory.

"Crop-based fuels offer the best option to lessen or stop our dependence on oil. If we ensure biofuels' proper and sufficient usage, storage and transport, we will no longer have to contend with the burden of coping with every oil price hike and its effect on every commodity," he added.

Not only would the country benefit from less dependence on imported oil through the use of alternative fuels, but it would also help protect the environment.

He said that unlike petroleum-based fuels, ethanol was cleaner as it emitted less carbon dioxide.

"To attain self-sufficiency in the energy sector, it is necessary to accelerate exploration, development and utilization of indigenous energy sources; intensify renewable energy development; and increase the use of alternative fuels," he said.

Inflation...

From page B1

items, to 3.1 percent from 3.3 percent.

The increase in the prices of clothing and services, however, accelerated to 3.2 percent and 11.1 percent, respectively, in May from 3.1 percent and 10.6 percent the previous month.

Core inflation, which does not factor in the volatile prices of food and energy, slowed down to 6.1 percent in May from 6.3 percent in April.

The slowdown in inflation was posted despite the recent implementation of the Reformed VAT Law , which expanded the coverage of the value-added tax last November and increased the tax rate to 12 percent from 10 in February.

Arroyo said the appreciation of the peso was a major reason inflation was kept below expectations despite the impact of the VAT on consumer prices.

He noted that the peso stood at an average of 52.07 to a dollar in May, stronger than the 54.34 in the same month last year.

An appreciation of the local currency makes prices of imported goods cheaper, thus helping ease inflationary pressures.

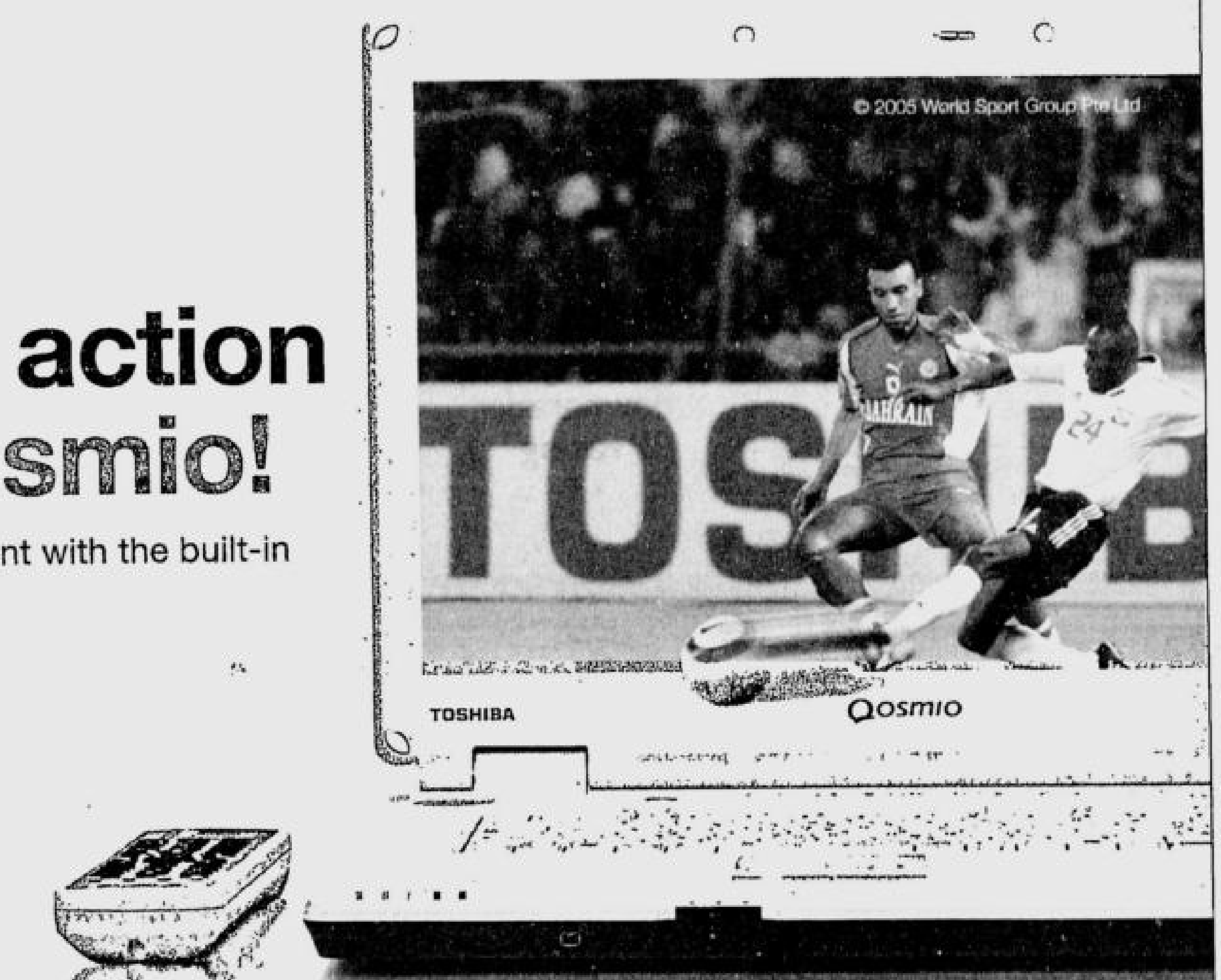
Neda ...

From page B1

The project's first phase involves the rehabilitation of the South Rail network covering Magallanes in Makati City to Legaspi, Albay. This section is expected to be completed by 2009.

The second phase calls for the construction of the Sorsogon railroad extension, and will be completed by 2011.

Chinese interest in South Rail peaked as the Philippine government sealed an economic cooperation deal with the People's Republic of China on Monday, vowing greater business ties between both countries.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Soy sauce companies urged to improve product quality

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE BUREAU OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHeries Product Standards, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, has urged local soy sauce manufacturers to upgrade their facilities to make locally-manufactured soy sauce acceptable to the international market.

"All of our soy sauce manufacturers need to improve their facilities [so that] their products [will have a] longer shelf-life. This is the concern of importing countries like the European Union," said BAFPS Director Gilbert Layese in an interview.

The European Commission's Food Standards Agency has banned the entry of Philippine-made soy sauce because it has been found to contain the chemical contaminant 3-monochloropropane-1,2-diol (3-MCPD), which could pose a health hazard.

Layese said existing facilities of soy sauce manufacturers were outdated and unable to remove impurities.

Soy sauce is a salty, dark liquid produced from fermented soybeans and roasted grain.

It accounts for the bulk of condiments exported by the Philippines with a 37-39 percent share, followed by vinegar.

The National Statistics Office-Family Income and Expenditures Survey (FIES) revealed that in 1994, Filipino households spent P11 billion on sauces, salt, and other spices and seasoning, which went up to P16 billion in 1997.

Households from NCR, Southern Tagalog, and Central Luzon were the leading buyers of these condiments.

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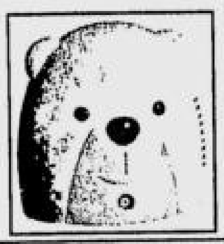

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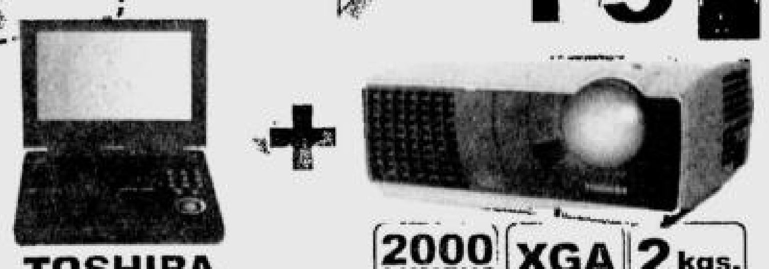

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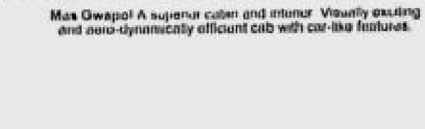

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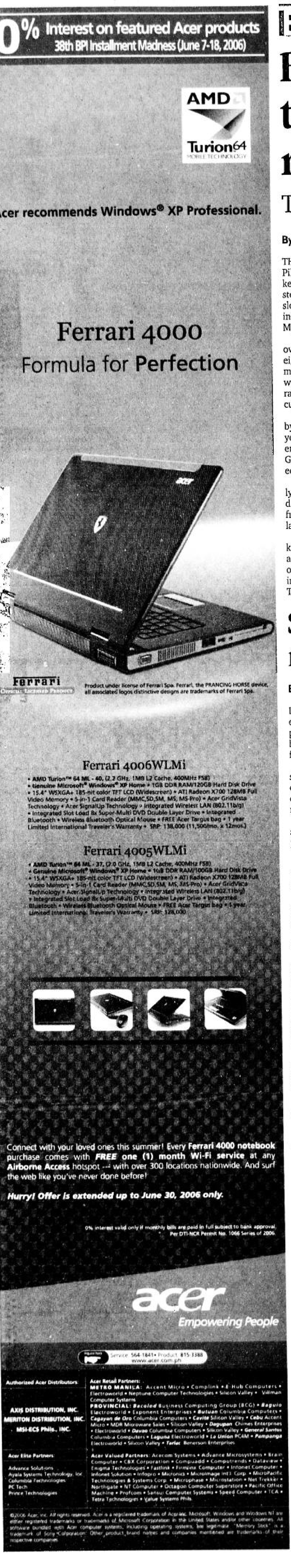

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BSP expected to keep policy rates unchanged

Traders see 50 bps hike in H2

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas yesterday said it could keep its overnight interest rates steady in the short term given the slowdown in the country's annual inflation rate to 6.9 percent in May from 7.1 percent in April.

The BSP, which has kept its overnight rates unchanged for the eighth straight month during its monthly policy-rate setting last week, sees its current overnight rates still appropriate with the current economic environment.

The May inflation rate released by the National Statistics Office yesterday was close to the lower end of BSP's target range, BSP Gov. Amando Tetangco Jr. pointed out.

"Demand pressures are broadly muted. Supply shocks are still dominant and price pressures from these should not be long-lasting," Tetangco said.

"This provides some basis for keeping the present policy stance at this time, while keeping an eye on domestic liquidity and foreign interest rate movements," Tetangco said.

TETANGCO

The BSP sees the inflation rate slowing down by the second semester. Its overnight borrowing rate is at 7.5 percent while lending rate is at 9.75 percent.

But traders said the BSP would likely raise its interest rates by about 50 basis points in the second semester to nudge up low-yielding Treasury bill rates.

Will Oswald, JP Morgan's global head of emerging markets quantitative strategy, said Asian central banks would still be affected by the US Federal Reserve's future action.

Shipping firm starts modernization program

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

LORENZO SHIPPING CORP. IS embarking on a modernization program to boost revenue and help offset higher costs arising from fuel price increases.

LSC president Romeo Malig told stockholders yesterday that fuel costs this year were expected to increase by 15 to 16 percent to P466 million from P400 million last year.

The cargo liner industry, he said, was marked by volatile prices and tight competition.

"LSC is set on being the cargo liner of choice by enhancing service quality," he said.

In line with this, Malig said LSC would spend P70 million for the acquisition of dry and livestock containers. Of the amount, P50 million will be used to purchase 500 dry containers while P20 million will be used to buy 60 livestock vans.

In the first quarter, net revenue grew 11.54 percent to P324.6 million. Volume as measured by ton equivalent units was lower by 7 percent due to the softening of the market.

PNOC-EDC to drill new geothermal well in Leyte

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) plans to drill a new geothermal well in Cabalian, Southern Leyte to determine whether the available steam in the area could support the generation of 100 megawatts to 110 MW of power.

Eduardo Mañalac, president and chief executive of PNOC-EDC parent firm PNOC, said the drilling would be done this year.

Depending on the results of the drilling, he said the state firm would be able to determine the feasibility of developing the project, which could pave the way for a new power source for the power-hungry Mindanao grid.

In terms of funding, he said PNOC-EDC had already talked to the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for possible official development assistance (Oda).

He said the construction of an 87-kilometer transmission line that would deliver power from the Cabalian area to Ormoc, also in Leyte was critical to the project.

Also, he said a $400-million submarine cable would also have to be constructed to transport power from Cabalian to Northern Mindanao.

National Transmission Corp. president and chief executive Alan Ortiz earlier said the state firm would be batting for a 2009-2010 implementation of the multimillion-dollar Leyte-Mindanao interconnection project.

He said it would make sense for the government, through the Department of Energy, to revisit the project and possibly accelerate its implementation as it could help prevent a power crisis in the Mindanao grid.

RP eyes $1-B bond float

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT plans to tap the offshore capital market anew for a fresh global bond offering of about $1 billion this month, banking sources said yesterday.

After a regional selldown on emerging markets that jacked up the yields on Republic of the Philippine bonds in previous weeks, the government invited over the weekend investment bankers to submit a new foreign bond float proposal, the sources said.

The government did not indicate the size or maturity of the planned offer, but banking sources said it would shoot for $1 billion—representing its remaining foreign financing requirement for this year.

"The market is not as good as before, but it's good enough. Besides, you'll never know whether the future will be better or worse," an investment banker who submitted a proposal said.

The banker also said it would be better to join the offshore debt pipeline now because the global markets seasonally turned sluggish in July and August when most fund managers were usually out for summer vacation.

The much-awaited World Cup, the banker said, would also add to the market's distraction if the government were to wait longer.

The Philippines had already filed with the US Securities and Exchange Commission an application for authority to raise as much as $3.5 billion in global bonds.

The last time the government joined the high-yield debt pipeline was in January, raising $2.1 billion through a combination of global bond and euro bond floats. *Doris C. Dumlao*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of June 6, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL			
		BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9	3,000
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	35.5	35.5	35	35.5	284,100
Bank Of The Phil. Islands	54	54	53.5	54	542,900
China Banking Corp.	900	900	900	900	100
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	300
Export And Ind. Bank A	0.4	0.41	0.4	0.41	77,090,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	71	71.5	70.5	71.5	181,400
International Exch. Bank	41	41.5	41	41.5	3,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	36	36	33.5	34.5	931,800
Phil. Bank Of Comm. A	45	56	45	56	3,000
Philippine National Bank	33	33	33	33	2,300
Phil. Savings Bank	39	39.5	39	39.5	9,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	20.25	20.25	19.5	19.75	153,600
Security Bank Corp.	51	51	50	50	298,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
Manulife Financial Corp.	1750	1800	1750	1785	540
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	70,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2080	2080	2080	2080	80
Ivantage Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.22	1.26	2,628,000
		INDUSTRIAL			
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
First Gen Corp.	46.5	46.5	46	46	78,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46	46.5	46	46.5	95,200
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14.25	14.5	8,500
Manila Electric Co. B	22	22.5	21.5	22.5	467,200
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.3	729,000
Petron Corp.	4.15	4.2	4.1	4.15	3,563,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	90,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.93	400,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	96,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.25	23	23.25	43,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	34.5	34.5	34	34	652,800
Pancake House Inc.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	10,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	573,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64	63.5	64	57,400
San Miguel Corp. B	71	71.5	70.5	71.5	169,800
Universal Robina Corp	20	20	19.5	20	1,357,400
Vitarich Corp.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	100,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	710,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.2	1.26	4,216,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.65	4.75	4.65	4.75	3,415,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Global Equities Inc.	0.09	0.0925	0.09	0.09	2,400,000
Panasonic Mfg Phil Corp.	7	7.5	7	7.5	222,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	50,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Ayala Corp.	397.5	397.5	395	397.5	73,810
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.5	0.5	610,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6	329,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.85	3.9	5,395,000
APC Group Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	1,300,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	100,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	50,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	105,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	5,981,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.85	3,239,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	2.9	3.2	2.9	3.2	558,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.6	543,000
Keppel Holdings	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	50,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	30,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	1,900,000
SM Investments Corp.	225	227	225	227	91,490
South China Resources Inc.	0.91	0.91	0.85	0.85	360,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	1,970,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc	12.75	13	12.25	13	9,222,400
Belle Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.1	1.1	4,943,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	2,800,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.02	2.04	2	2.02	795,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.58	1.6	55,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.59	0.6	0.58	0.6	7,120,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	100,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.031	0.033	0.031	0.033	2,500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.42	1.48	1.42	1.46	7,772,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.065	0.065	300,000
City & Land Developers	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	135,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.52	1.54	1.52	1.54	5,998,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.215	0.22	0.215	0.22	5,680,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	1,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.3	0.31	0.3	0.3	2,290,000
SM Development Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	210,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.1	2,853,000
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.59	0.65	0.59	0.65	90,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	0.0775	1,900,000
		SERVICE			
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	15.25	15.5	15.25	15.5	259,200
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.24	5,537,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	900	900	885	885	16,570
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.6	3.7	3.55	3.7	1,739,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1995	1995	1980	1990	83,300
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Ionics Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.48	2.65	4,721,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.048	0.05	0.048	0.05	4,600,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.36	21,000
Philweb Corp.	0.031	0.032	0.031	0.032	239,900,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Asian Terminals Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.75	2.75	56,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	13.75	13.75	13.75	13.75	2,377,400
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	50,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.48	1.5	1.46	1.46	1,642,000
Manila Jockey Club	2.8	3	2.7	3	81,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc	0.58	0.6	0.57	0.6	820,000
		EDUCATION			
Far Eastern University	1000	1050	1000	1050	1,430
iPeople Inc.	3	3	3	3	7,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Macroasia Corp.	2.04	2.06	2.02	2.06	110,000
Paxys Inc.	11.25	11.5	11.25	11.25	24,800
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
		MINING			
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0086	0.0085	0.0085	16,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	7	7	6.8	7	666,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	11,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	4,860,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	3,790,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.022	0.022	0.022	0.022	85,900,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.023	0.024	0.023	0.023	7,300,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	507,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	3.6	3.6	3.45	3.6	4,713,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6	5,830,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	27.5	27.5	27	27.5	77,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.53	0.53	0.53	0.53	50,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	650,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	465,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	77,400,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.16	1.18	1.14	1.14	1,277,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	145,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	16.5	16.5	16	16.5	268,300
		PREFERRED			
DMCI Holdings Inc.- Pref	1400	1400	1400	1400	400
		WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.			
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (PDR)	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.5	187,900

CURRENCIES

June 6, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.774713	1.000000	52.6940
Japan	Yen	0.006900	0.008906	0.4693
United Kingdom	Pound	1.450341	1.872100	98.6484
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099852	0.128889	6.7917
Switzerland	Franc	0.641584	0.828157	43.6389
Canada	Dollar	0.699705	0.903179	47.5921
Singapore	Dollar	0.491009	0.633794	33.3971
Australia	Dollar	0.582579	0.751993	39.6255
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.055106	2.652731	139.7830
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206563	0.266631	14.0499
Brunei	Dollar	0.489458	0.631792	33.2916
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000108	0.0057
Thailand	Baht	0.020318	0.026226	1.3820
UAE	Dirham	0.210933	0.272272	14.3471
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.290800	68.0174
ArgentinaPeso	0.251776	0.324992	17.1251	
Brazil	REAL	0.343935	0.443951	23.3936
Denmark	Kroner	0.134068	0.173055	9.1190
India	Rupee	0.016952	0.021882	1.1531
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.213244	0.275255	14.5043
Mexico	New Peso	0.068399	0.088289	4.6523
New Zealand	Dollar	0.489860	0.632311	33.3190
Norway	Kroner	0.128889	0.166370	8.7667
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012888	0.016636	0.8766
South Africa	Rand	0.117026	0.151057	7.9598
Korea	Won	0.000822	0.001061	0.0559
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024180	0.031211	1.6446

Shares close lower

From page B1

fresh losses on Wall Street sparked by hardline comments on the inflation risk from US Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke.

The composite index ended 14.61 points down to 2,289.80, after trading between 2,270.38 and 2,304.41. Volume was 1.6 billion shares worth P868.9 million.

The broader all-shares index fell 8.95 points to 1,434.28.

Losers outnumbered gainers 61 to 16, with 42 stocks unchanged.

"The market is and will remain in a downward bias as we continue to be influenced by interest rate hike concerns in the US," said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

With no strong leads on the domestic front, the local bourse moved in line with other markets in the region, which all tracked Wall Street's sharp retreat.

Inflation worries in the United States due to higher oil prices and signals that the US Federal Reserve will continue to lift rates pulled down the Dow Jones industrial average by nearly 200 points on Monday. *AFP*

GMA, here are your billions

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

THE REVENUE-PRESSED MALAcañang is sitting on a gold mine, if only Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her finance people just look right under their noses.

The 178-hectare Camp Aguinaldo is right there for the taking, and the landowner, Ortigas and Co., which has allowed the military unlimited usufruct use since the Commonwealth years, is finally willing to let go and donate possibly half or even a bigger part of the property to the government, provided Ortigas gets back the remainder.

In addition, Ortigas is proposing usufruct use of its 250-hectare property in the Tanay area for the Logistics Command and other military offices that may be displaced out of Camp Aguinaldo.

Ortigas chief operating officer Rex Drilon II had already submitted a proposal to Malacañang and met with BCDA president Narciso Abaya, but somehow the Ortigas communication has been lost in the bowels of the bureaucracy.

Even then, BCDA executive vice president Isaac Puno III thinks that the Aguinaldo camp is ideal for commercial and mixed-used development, and can follow the privatization model of Fort Bonifacio, whose Ramos-era sale gave the Philippines its first-ever, one-time, budget surplus.

Assuming that only 100 hectares of the military facility could actually be sold at a conservative P30,000 a square meter—empty lots at the adjoining Corinthian Gardens already go for about P38,000 a sqm—Camp Aguinaldo is easily worth P30 billion.

At 178 hectares, that figure rises to P53.4 billion.

(Disclosure: If Cocktales seems to sound like pushing the plan, it is because it was actually he, a former Camp Crame resident, who had broached the idea to Drilon, BCDA's Abaya and Puno, and to Ortigas partner, HSBC.)

Unpacified opponents

THE planholders' fight with the Yuchengcos' Pacific Plans has taken a definite political dimension that harks back to the Edsa I and Edsa II years.

The president of the protesting pre-need planholders, Philip Piccio, is a son of the Air Force chief who had stayed loyal to Ferdinand Marcos until the very end. Philip, in fact, was married on the first day of Edsa 1, a Saturday (Feb. 22, 1986, to history buffs), at the Villamor Air Base chapel, with no less than Imelda Marcos and Armed Forces chief Fabian Ver as sponsors.

The entry of Erap friends Mark Jimenez and opposition Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico against taipan Alfonso Yuchengco, a major contributor to the anti-Marcos and the anti-Erap forces, completes the Edsa II equation.

Heard through the grapevine

JAPANESE engineering giant Daikin had to send posthaste a retired executive, according to court records, to "advise" the young Japanese president it had previously assigned to manage the Philippine venture, which unfortunately is now under receivership.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

BIR exempts US Embassy from VAT

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF Internal Revenue has issued a circular exempting the US Embassy from the payment of the 12-percent value-added tax on its purchase of local goods and services.

Under Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 31-2006, the BIR said purchases of goods and services made by the embassy of the United States for the construction or renovation of its property would be exempted from VAT.

The BIR said the exemption was consistent with the provisions of the Omnibus Investment Code of 1987, which said that export sales shall be exempted from VAT. The revenue agency said that since premises of the US Embassy are considered foreign territory, then any sale to it shall be treated as exports.

The Omnibus Investment Code grants various perks to exporters, including VAT exemption, as an incentive for their dollar contributions to the local economy.

The granting of the exemption came after the US Embassy, situated in Manila, made known its plans to undertake several construction and renovation projects soon.

These initiatives include the Consular Annex major rehabilitation project, the Chancery rehabilitation project and the new construction on the Chancery Compound.

The circular allows the US Embassy to have a construction agent, which will be chosen by the US state department. The construction agent will make the purchases and avail itself of the VAT exemption in behalf of the US Embassy.

The BIR added that suppliers to the US Embassy would be given a zero VAT rating, but stressed that the zero rating would be applied only to materials and services needed for the construction and renovation of US Embassy property.

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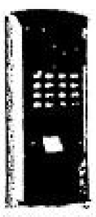

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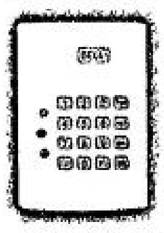

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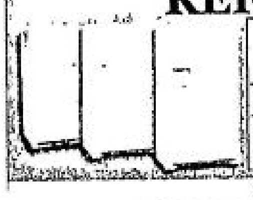

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Petron studying feasibility of second refinery

New plant in Mindanao or expansion of facility in Bataan

By Abigail L. Ho

INDUSTRY LEADER PETRON CORP. WILL look into the feasibility of either putting up a second oil refinery in Mindanao or expanding its existing refinery in Bataan.

Petron president and chief executive Khalid Al-Faddagh said President Macapagal-Arroyo, during her visit to Saudi Aramco a few weeks ago, asked Petron to study the possibility of building a second refinery in Mindanao.

Saudi Aramco holds a 40-percent stake in Petron.

"Of course, it has to make economic sense. That's really what we have agreed on, for Petron to do a feasibility study," he said.

He said the oil firm had already done a similar feasibility study in the past, but under "different economic conditions."

"We're now revisiting that study to determine whether that (refinery) will be built in Mindanao or in Bataan," he said.

Should the feasibility study show that it would not make economic sense for Petron to put up a refinery in Mindanao, he said the oil firm was committed to explore an alternative development project for the area, possibly an ethanol plant.

He said this would help spur the growth of the sugarcane industry as well as the use of biofuels in the country.

"But we need to be assured that we have a very strong (sugarcane) supply base in the Philippines. That's what we have been saying all along. We want to see a very strong ethanol industry that would make the most economic sense, and we believe in having such an industry in Mindanao," he said.

He said the feasibility study should take between two and three months to complete.

Petron has committed to eventually blend ethanol with its gasoline products through a memorandum of understanding with San Carlos Bio-Energy Inc., a joint venture between the National Development Corp. and Bronzeoak Philippines that will produce some 100,000 liters of bio-ethanol a day in its distillery plant by 2007.

Fellow refiner Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. started selling ethanol-blended gasoline last month, while Seaoil Petroleum Corp. started doing so as early as August last year.

Both oil firms rely on ethanol imports.

No plan to take over Poro Point, says BCDA exec

THE BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT Authority seemed to have backed off a brewing controversy over an apparent plan to take over Poro Point seaport after Judge Robert Cawed of the Regional Trial Court Branch 29 of San Fernando City, La Union slapped the agency and its subsidiary, Poro Point Management Corp., with a temporary restraining order .

The TRO was issued in response to a complaint filed by Bulk Handlers Inc. (BHI) against PPMC for passing a resolution declaring the contract BHI signed with BCDA in 1999 null and void. BCDA was included in the complaint.

BCDA president Narciso Abaya admitted in a statement that "only the courts could declare such contracts null and void."

"I would like to assure our investors and businessmen that the BCDA does not have any intention of declaring the Poro Point contract null and void," Abaya said.

Abaya said he was reacting to reports that the Northern Luzon business community was in an uproar over the reported takeover move of the BCDA after the PPMC board passed a resolution declaring the BCDA-BHI contract null and void.

PPMC is led by BCDA chair Filadelfo Singson-Rojas Jr. and Felix Singson-Racadio, president. The board also includes Emma Lim, Carmencita Itchon, Amparo Aspiras, Yves Nisce and Antonio Manguiat, son-in-law of La Union Congressman Manuel Ortega.

"We have no power to nullify contracts," Abaya underscored.

Earlier, the National Consumer Welfare Advocates Inc. (NCWAI) warned Abaya and Singson-Rojas that the reported take-over move "would send wrong signals to the investors in the region that the government does not believe in the sanctity of contracts."

NCWAI president Conrado delos Reyes said the local business community was aware that BHI had consistently remitted P50 million yearly to BCDA despite the latter's failure to deliver 80 hectares of the land in Poro Point to BHI as part of the 1999 agreement.

Local firm to assemble cheaper light trucks

TO MAKE AVAILABLE MORE AFfordable commercial vehicles for small businesses, Eastar Automotive Marketing Corp. will start the assembly and distribution of its second series of light trucks in the country—the Foton Gordox line.

Eamco imports for local assembly one- to four-tonner Foton Gordox mini trucks in CKD (completely knocked down) forms from Beiqi Motor Corp. in China. The company will make available in the local market the Foton Gordox in four variants: Cab-chassis only or with aluminum body, FB body type, jeepney type and drop side.

Eamco introduced in the local market in September last year the Yuejin Landox light trucks, bought in CKD form for local assembly from Yuejin Motor Corp., a subsidiary of Nanjing Automobile Group Corp. also of China.

Eamco marketing manager Rico San Agustin said the Foton Gordox vehicles were designed for small businesses that could not afford commercial vehicles that were currently available in the local market. He said all of its variants were affordable with the mini truck cab-chassis to be sold for only P350,000. Foton Gordox vehicles are covered by a warranty for one year or for the first 30,000 kilometers.

The vehicles are assembled locally under the strict quality control by Star Motors Manufacturing Inc.

The Forton Gordox vehicles were launched during the four-day China Machinery and Electronic Products Exhibit at the World Trade Center which started yesterday.

Eamco's Chinese partners—Nanjing Automobile Group and Beiqi Foton Motors—are among the leading light trucks manufacturers in China. Beiqi Foton is listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

"The availability of brand new but affordable light trucks is very good news to our Filipino entrepreneurs who have been forced to buy second-hand surplus units from Subic and Cebu as they could not affort the more expensive locally assembled Japanese light trucks," the company said in a statement.

METRO PACIFIC
thinking ahead

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

Please be advised that the Annual Meeting of the stockholders of METRO PACIFIC CORPORATION will be held on Thursday, 15th day of June 2006, 11:00 a.m. at The Mezzanine Function Room of Dusit Hotel Nikko, Ayala Centre, 1223 Makati City, Philippines, for the following purposes:

1. To consider and approve the President's Report and the Annual Report for the year 2005.
2. To consider and adopt the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31st December 2005 contained in the Annual Report.
3. To ratify all acts of the board of Directors and Management for the year 2005.
4. To approve the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12th day of August 2005.
5. To elect the Directors of the Company for the ensuing year.
6. To appoint the external auditor of the Company for the year 2006.
7. To approve: (i) the decrease in the authorized capital stock of the Company from Thirty Billion Pesos (PhP30,000,000,000) to One Billion Five Hundred Million Pesos (PhP1,500,000,000) divided into 1,450,000,000 common shares, 49,875,000 Series "1" preferred shares and 125,000 Series "2" preferred shares, all with par value of One Peso (PhP1.00) per share; (ii) the resulting decrease in the outstanding capital stock of the Company from 19,053,473,157 common shares and 2,500,000 Series "2" preferred shares to 952,673,658 common shares and 125,000 Series "2" preferred shares; and (iii) the corresponding amendment to Article Seventh of the Amended Articles of Incorporation of the Company.
8. To transact such other business as may properly come before the meeting and at any adjournment thereof.

The Board of Directors has fixed the close of business on the 3rd day of April 2006, as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice of and to vote at the Annual Stockholders' Meeting.

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People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Top industry experts poised for Graphic Expo seminars

THE COUNTRY'S LEADING EXPERTS in digital imaging, animation, web publishing, and state-of-the-art printing are now set and ready to share their knowledge and expertise at a seminar series that will be held during the staging of the prestigious Graphic Expo 2006 at the Philippine Trade Training Center from June 14 to 17.

Out to bare their trade secrets are 16 IT gurus who have played prominent roles in steering the digital graphics industry to its current status and are now gearing up the country's academe, entrepreneurial and corporate sectors for the future.

They are led by Adobe certified experts Jun Miranda and Mario Ramirez, graphic designer Ige Ramos, multimedia professor Ronnie Millevo, and Epson Stylus Pro photographer Domique James, among others.

President and creative director of digital imaging studio and service bureau PixelMagic, Miranda is the country's first Adobe certified expert and instructor in Photoshop CS, CompTIA certified technical trainer and Kodak authorized trainer. He led the country's digital artists and photographers as founding president of IdN Club Philippines and Club de Camera Digital, past president of the Camera Club of the Philippines, and is now the president and creative director of the Philippine Center for Creative Imaging.

Likewise an expert in Photoshop CS, Ramirez has taught students from the United States, Germany and Denmark and staffs of various companies, including newspaper and banking institutions. He also teaches 2D/3D and advanced AutoCAD to professionals.

Ramos, an instructor, is an award-winning publication design expert in the Philippines and abroad who holds the distinction of being one of five Filipino graphic designers featured in Southeast Asia's Graphic Designers.

Millevo is a professional multimedia lecturer and professor at the Dela Salle University's College of St. Benilde and St. Scholastica's College Manila. A fine arts practitioner, he also teaches computer graphic courses such as Adobe Photoshop, Premiere, Image Ready, Macromedia Flash, Director, and Dreamweaver, and conducts lectures on digital imaging, web and desktop publishing, audio-video editing, 2D animation and CD ROM interactive authoring for corporate functions.

The seminar series for this 11th edition of Graphic Expo covers 31 specialized topics on digital imaging applications. Graphic Expo is the country's premier trade show in these fields, all based on a unique concept of digital workflow and process complementation involving various stages of production.

Invited to join the seminars are professional and amateur graphic and digital designers, web masters, photographers, digital artists, animation and design studios, production houses, schools, training institutions, animators, multimedia specialists, corporate executives, students, hobbyists, and enthusiasts, among others.

Highlighting the seminar series during its four-day run will be a grand exhibit of this year's latest state-of-the-art products, equipment, facilities, tools and services in desktop and web publishing, digital imaging and photography, pre-press and print production, large format printing, and multimedia and animation.

Drawing thousands of visitors annually, Graphic Expo is supported by Epson, Hewlett Packard, Canon, eArt Philippines, IdN Club Philippines, Zone V Camera Club, Philippine Center for Creative Imaging, Outdoor Advertising Association of the Philippines, and Animation Council of the Philippines, and sponsored by, IT Update, Computerworld, Softrigger Interactive, Digital Fox, GA Printing Inc, and Web Philippines.

SECURITY BANK CORP WINS GOLD QUILL AWARD OF MERIT

The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) conferred the Gold Quill Award of Merit to Security Bank Corp (SBC) for its 2004 Annual Report. The theme 'Our Customer. Our Focus.' emphasizes Security Bank's commitment to place the customer first at all times. As one of the country's most stable universal banks, it also reinforces the bank's continuing efforts to respond to its customer's varied banking needs by customizing innovative bank products of distinctive quality that provide uncomplicated and effective business solutions. The Gold Quill is recognized as the benchmark for the highest level of achievement in communication in the country, designed to honor technical expertise, strategic thinking, creativity, innovation and measured results. Shown (from left) are IABC chair Warren Bickford and IABC director Ronnie Tapia-Merck with Security Bank assistant vice president and corporate communications head Rica Baello-Peñalosa with Carlo M. Borromeo, first vice president and chief financial officer, Manny T. Narciso, first vice president for corporate transaction banking division, and IABC director Elpi Cuna during the awarding ceremonies.

UNILAB'S CONTINUING SUPPORT TO DOCTORS CITED

United Laboratories Inc (Unilab), the country's leading pharmaceutical company, has been cited by the Philippine Medical Association (PMA) for its outstanding partnership with the PMA in advancing the medical profession in the country. More than recognition, the award affirms Unilab's time-honored commitment to actively support doctors and healthcare professionals through continuing medical education and major programs aimed at improving access to quality healthcare of millions of Filipinos. Unilab chair Jocelyn Campos Hess (2nd from left) received the award for Unilab during the PMA's 99th Annual Convention May 20 at the Manila Hotel. Shown are (from left) incoming PMA president Dr. Jose Asa Sabili, outgoing PMA president Dr. Modesto O. Llamas, awards committee chair Dr. Nenita C. Lee Tan, Unilab AVP for professional relations Francisco M. Morales, and PMA secretary general Dr. Rey Melchor F. Santos.

Real estate investing: How-to lectures

A 15-TOPIC SERIES OF LECTURES on the different how tos of Investing in Real Estate will be conducted by Urban Institute of Real Estate at 1:30 to 6 p.m. every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, June 26 to July 28 at the Maximo Function Room, second floor, Max's Restaurant, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City. Invited to attend these seminars are real estate investors, developers, professionals and property owners.

Prospective investors, developers, landowners and realty professionals who will participate in this series of lectures will gain sufficient insights and confidence to finally launch proposed real estate investments. They will learn the ABCs of real estate investing and avoid costly mistakes usually suffered by inexperienced investors, thus guiding them to a pleasant and successful real estate business. Numerous issues concerning prospective real estate investors, financiers and developers; owners and realty professionals would be discussed.

The topics, which may be attended separately and are all stand alone are as follows: June 26-Investing in Real Estate: Opportunities, Techniques and What are Needed to Learn before Investing; June 28-Legal Aspect of Sale, Mortgage and Lease with Contract Documentation and Registration; June 30-Management of Rental Properties: How to Maximize Income of Rental Properties; July 3-Joint Ventures and Syndications for Real Estate Projects; July 5-Taxation Aspects of Real Estate Transactions & Real Property Assessment; July 7-How to Start and Manage A Successful Real Estate Brokerage Company; July 10-Making Big Money in Distressed Properties. July 12-How tos of Real Property Appraisal; July 14-Property Development Principles and updates on HLURB Rules And Regulations; July 17-How tos of Installment Sales and Lease-to-Own Scheme; July 19-Real Estate Finance and Investment Analysis; July 21-Mathematics of Real Estate Investment;

July 24-Real Estate Accounting: Avoiding Violations and Penalties; July 26-How to Prevent and Remedy Foreclosure; July 28-Buying and Financing Your First Home: What You Must Know.

This Lecture Series is accredited by DTI for CEP compliance and will have as lecturer lawyer Dennis Tablizo, noted resource speaker on land laws; and engineer Enrico Cruz, who has more than 35 years in real estate, engineering, construction, management and education. Cruz is also a licensed real estate consultant and 1st and 8th placer in the real estate appraiser's and broker's board examinations respectively, and was invested as a "Real Estate Fellow" by the Philippine Council of Real Estate Educators.

For other details or advance registration, Urban Institute may be reached at 681-0928 or at 0916-426-9174, or by e-mail urbanet@pacific.net.ph.

FIL-NEGOSYO EXPO

FIL-NEGOSYO EXPO SPONSORS FREE SEMINARS FOR THE PUBLIC

Fil-Negosyo 2006, featuring Filipino entrepreneurs showcasing their products and services, will be held from June 23 to July 2 at the Megatrade Hall 2, SM Megamall. Highlights of the expo are free seminars and trainings from different organizations, government agencies and companies, product presentations and giveaways, encounters with business experts, product samplings and many more. Shown during the signing of the memorandum of agreement on the free seminars are (from left, standing): Orlando Ballesteros, operations head, Ex-Link Corp; Zeny Cabarido, administration and finance manager, Insol Development Foundation Inc; Buneeh Pagdanganan, managing consultant, Convergent Consulting; Mitch Ballesteros, project director, Ex-Link Corp; Shiela Bermudez, Convergent Consulting; Joan De Ocampo, project officer, Ex-Link Corp; Joann Viriña, exhibit officer, Megatrade Hall; Ariel Pagdanganan, marketing manager, Convergent Consulting; (seated, from left): Stephanie Escareal, managing consultant, Convergent Consulting; Belina Conception, representative, TLRC; Lourdes Rivera, Philippine Meat Processing Guru, VP, Spices and Food Mix Ultima Entrepinoy; Beth Garbo, exhibit manager, Megatrade Hall; Cindy Sajwani, EVP, Businessmaker Academy Inc; Angie Afante, Marketing Logistics, Insol Development Foundation Inc. For details, call Ex-Link Corp at 643-3887, 640-1280, 641-2814, 0920-9242532, or e-mail ex_link2001@yahoo.com.

Thunderbird sponsors 2006 World Slasher Cup II

THE 2006 WORLD SLASHER CUP INVITATIONAL 8-COCK Derby has once again tapped Thunderbird Power Feeds as sponsor of the Araneta Coliseum-slated event on June 13, 15 and 17 hosted by the Pintakasi of Champions. Regarded as the "Olympics of Cockfighting", the World Slasher Cup, which is now on its 43rd year, is highly revered by Filipino cockfighters for its contribution to the wide acceptance and immense popularity of gamefowl breeding and competition in the Philippines today. Those set to join are advised to make their cockhouse reservations early by calling Boy San Pedro at 911-3101 local 8352/8361 or at 911-2928. Expected to grace the event is a line-up of top American rooster-raisers from Texas, Tennessee, Louisiana, Oklahoma, California and Alabama. The home team will be led by four-time WSC champion Dicky Lim of the Winslet fame, together with 2006 WSC I co-titlists Philip Chiongbian and the Ferdie Patam-Joel Fernando tandem.

Century Tuna cooking class

SOUTHEAST ASIA IS EVERY FOOD ENTHUSIAST'S PARadise. Century Tuna lifestyle cooking class lets you experience the exotic flavors of Southeast Asia as guest chef instructor Sam de Leoz shares the tricks to tasty dishes that is distinctly from the region. Class will be on June 8 from 1 to 4 p.m. Just bring P200 and two Century Tuna red label products. The Century Tuna Culinary Club is at Unit 107 Ortigas Bazaar Building, Ortigas Town Center, Doña Julia Vargas Avenue, Pasig City. To reserve slots, call 637-1033 and 637-1044, text 0906-2329857.

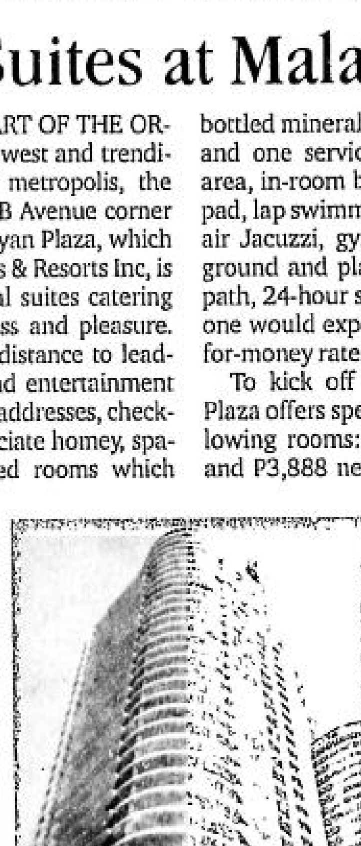
F AND H RECOGNIZED ANEW

F and Hlfolded & hung, a Filipino-owned company that takes pride in its Filipino-designed and manufactured clothes that have become a trendsetter in the retail industry, was again recognized for its continuous effort to uplift the retail industry and contribute to the growth of the country's economy. Fresh from being honored in December 2005 with the Hall of Fame Award for Outstanding Filipino Retailer by The Philippine Retailers Association and the Department of Trade and Industry, F and Hlfolded&hung rides high again in 2006 as its efforts in the franchising operations were recognized by the Philippine Franchise Association, a member of the World Franchise Council and the Department of Trade and Industry by bestowing the company the 2005 Franchise Excellence Award for Most Promising Filipino Franchise of the Year-Retail Category in ceremonies held March 20 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Ortigas Pasig. F and H president Ronald Pineda accepted the award from the prestigious association and expressed gratitude to all his employees and franchisees for making this accomplishment possible. The company now has 21 company-owned and four franchise-owned stores (two in Cebu and two in Davao). This second quarter of the year, five more stores will open (at SM Clark, SM Mall of Asia and SM Southmall and franchise-owned SM Davao and Limketkai Mall in Cagayan De Oro). Shown are F&H general manager Ferdie Joson and F&H president Ronald Pineda.

Quantum Suites at Malayan Plaza

NESTLED RIGHT IN THE HEART OF THE ORtigas Business District is the newest and trendiest hotel in this part of the metropolis, the Malayan Plaza. Located at ADB Avenue corner Opal Road, the imposing Malayan Plaza, which is managed by Quantum Hotels & Resorts Inc, is the newest serviced residential suites catering to guests traveling for business and pleasure. Conveniently within walking distance to leading shopping malls, dining and entertainment centers as well as top business addresses, checking-in guests will surely appreciate homey, spacious, and tastefully furnished rooms which convey modern day lifestyle living with functionality and comfort.

The Malayan Plaza's facilities and amenities include fully furnished suites with living, dining, kitchen and bedroom areas, airy veranda with a breathtaking view of the Ortigas skyline for select suites, 29-inch flat screen color TV with DVD player and cable programming, NDD/IDD telephone system, individually-controlled air-conditioning, a full kitchen equipped with state-of-the-art cooking and dining facilities, in-room video intercom, complimentary bottled mineral water, four passenger elevators and one service elevator, a 10-level parking area, in-room broadband Internet access, helipad, lap swimming pool and kiddie pool, open-air Jacuzzi, gym, gameroom, children's playground and playroom, mini-park and jogging path, 24-hour security and other top amenities one would expect in a deluxe hotel at a value-for-money rate.



To kick off its soft-opening, the Malayan Plaza offers special discounted rates for the following rooms: P2,888 net for a studio room and P3,888 net for a 1-bedroom suite. 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom suites will be made available within the year. Room rates are inclusive of complimentary buffet breakfast for two, welcome fruit platter, in-room coffee and tea-making facilities, complimentary bottled mineral water replenished daily, daily supply of newspaper and free access to the fitness center, swimming pool, Jacuzzi, playroom, jogging path and garden deck. Special soft-opening promo rates are valid from now until Aug 15. For inquires and reservations call 706-0055, or log on to www.quantum-suites.com.

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN
Agham Road, Diliman, Quezon City

BULLETIN OF VACANT POSITIONS

(In compliance with R.A. 7041)

A. GENERAL INVESTIGATION BUREAU - A

1. CLERK III - SG 6

Item Nos. OMBA-CK3-12-2004; OMBA-CK3-13-2004; OMBA-CK3-14-2004; (3 Positions)

Education: Completion of two years studies in college; Experience: None required; Training: None required; Eligibility: Career Service Subprofessional/First Level Eligibility

2. SECRETARY II - SG 9

Item Nos. OMBA-SEC2-6-1998 (1 Position)

Education: Completion of two years studies in college; Experience: 1 year or relevant experience; Training: 4 hours of relevant training; Eligibility: Career Service Subprofessional/First Level Eligibility

Applicants should submit within ten (10) calendar days from the date of this publication to the Human Resource Management Division at the above address, the following requirements:

1) A letter stating the position applied for;
2) Duly accomplished Personal Data Sheet (CSC Form 212);
3) "1x1" picture (colored);
4) *Bar/Board Rating or CSC Certificate of Eligibility;
5) *Transcript of Records;
6) *Certificates of Seminars/Training attended;
7) *Service Records or Certificates from previous/present employers stating the position assumed and corresponding actual duties and responsibilities (if applicable);
8) *Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
9) Statement duly signed by the applicants as to any relative(s) within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, currently employed with the Office of the Ombudsman.

*Where photocopies are filed, the documents must be certified as true copies by the proper authorities or the applicant may present the originals to the Human Resource Management Officer for comparison with the photocopies.

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Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Judicial and Bar Council announces the opening of the position of **OVERALL DEPUTY OMBUDSMAN** vacated by Hon. Margarito P. Gervacio Jr.

Applicants/recommendees must (1) be a natural-born citizen of the Philippines; (2) be at least 40 years old at the time of his appointment; (3) be of recognized probity and independence; (4) be a member of the Philippine Bar; (5) not have been a candidate for any elective office in the immediately preceding election; and (6) have been for ten years or more a judge or engaged in the practice of law in the Philippines.

Applicants must submit the following:

Application Letter/Recommendation letter with conforme of the recommendee	**6 copies**
Personal Data Sheet (JBC Form I down-loadable from the JBC Website http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph)	**6 copies**
Picture (2x2)	**4 copies**
Certificate of Good Standing of latest Official Receipt from the IBP National Treasurer	**6 copies**
ITR for 2 preceding years	**6 copies**
NBI Clearance	**6 copies**
Transcript of Records	**6 copies**
Police Clearance from Place of Residence	**6 copies**

Applications/recommendations must be submitted NOT LATER THAN TUESDAY, June 13, 2006.

The JBC also announces that the following are applicants for different vacant judgeship positions:

REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC): (REGION IV) – NASUGBU, BATANGS: (Br. 14) PILAPIL, Joannes Vinarao **(REGION V) – CATAINGAN, MASBATE:** ACAIN, Carlos I.; CASTILLO, Eva Almario; LIM, Manuel C. **(REGION VII) – LAPU-LAPU CITY, CEBU:** (Br. 27) MARIGOMEN, Douglas Arturo C.

METROPOLITAN TRIAL COURT (METC): (NCJR) – MANILA: (Brs. 8,10,12,19,23,28 & 30) MANUEL, Martina Millan; PACULDO, Lorenza Bordios **PASIG CITY:** (Br.71) PACULDO, Lorenza Bordios

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES (MTCC): (REGION II) – TUGUEGARAO CITY, CAGAYAN: (Br.4) GAÑAC, Norman C. **(REGION III) – SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA:** (Br.4) TUAZON, Maria Zoraida Zabat

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT (MTC): (REGION II) – PEÑABLANCA, CAGAYAN: AGLAUA, Racquel Reyes; BARCENA, Andrew U.; CABRIDO, Renato T.; CAMPOS, Salvador B.; CARAG, Jesusa Liquigan; CASTILLO, Edmar Sr. P.; DARAN, Alexander P.; GAÑAC, Norman C.; ISRAEL, Maita Grace Deray; OLERIANA, Olga Lopez; ORRO, Edgar S.; REYES, Isidro S. **(REGION III) – NAMPICUAN, NUEVA ECIJA:** BAUTISTA, Leo Cecilio D.; SADURAL, Erick A.; SANDOVAL, Ronald P.

MUNICIPAL CIRCUIT TRIAL COURT (MCTC): (REGION IV) – PAETE-PAKIL-PANGIL, LAGUNA: BAUTISTA, Josephine Gonzales; CASIÑO, Mitushealla Manzanero; ORTIZ, Maria Roma Flor Acosta **MANSALAY-BULALACAO, MINDORO ORIENTAL:** DELOS REYES, Manuel S.; FAMILARA, Mariano II S.; REYES, Edralin C. **(REGION V) – RAGAY-DEL GALLEGO, CAMARINES SUR:** AGANAN, Jorge John S.; CO, Sarina Rosa Gonzales **BATO-SAN MIGUEL, CATANDUANES:** MENDOZA, Luisito Z.; QUINTANA, Renato C.; TAÑON, Rizalina Velasco **(REGION VIII) – MAC ARTHUR-MAYORGA, LEYTE:** OCTA, Chona Apostol **SAN JUAN-ST. BERNARD, SOUTHERN LEYTE:** CUATON, Wenifredo C.; DAGALA, Exequil L.; TAYAPAD, Hector Jr. G. **(REGION XII) – MOLUNDO-LUMBA-BAYABAO-MAGUING, LANAO DEL SUR:** ABINAL, Ottowa B.; DISALO, Gamor B.; MAMUTUK, Abdul Azis M.

The public may submit any sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants **not later than 16 JUNE 2006.**

Applications/recommendations or sworn complaint/opposition must be addressed to:

Secretariat, Judicial and Bar Council
Second Floor, Centennial Building
Supreme Court, Padre-Faura, Manila
Tel. No. 552-9512 Fax No. 552-9598

06 June 2006

(Sgd.) **MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA**
Clerk of Court &
Ex Officio Secretary

(PDI--June 7, 2006)

TransCo
Republic of the Philippines
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Engineering Laboratory Equipment/Apparatus

[Reference No.: PB060322-EL0037]

1. The *National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region (TRANSCO-HO)*, through the *CY2006 Corporate Budget approved by the TRANSCO Board*, intends to apply the sum of ***Php 10,156,000.00*** being the Total Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Supply and Delivery of Engineering Laboratory Equipment/Apparatus.** Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *TRANSCO-HO* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for *Laboratory Equipment/ Apparatus.* Delivery of the GOODS is required *within thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of approved Purchase Order.* The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders, starting June 5, 2006 to July 4, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of ***Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2,000.00)***. The method of payment will be CASH. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
5. The *TRANSCO-HO* will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on June 20, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at same address below. Requests for clarifications on the bid documents should be submitted before the Pre-Bid Conference.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before 2:00 p.m. of July 5, 2006. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form and amount:

Form of Security	Amount
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	1% of ABC
2. Bank guarantee	1.5% of ABC
3. Surety bond	2.5% of ABC
4. Foreign government guarantee	100% of ABC

or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted

7. Bid opening shall be on July 5, 2006 / 2:00 p.m. at the *Admin Conference Room, same address below.* Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *National Transmission Corporation* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

National Transmission Corporation, Head Office Region
Mr. Armando N. Ochoa, BAC Chairman
MMD Office, G/F TransCo Main Bldg.
Power Center, Quezon Ave. corner BIR Road
Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No.: (632) 981-2235 / Fax No. (632) 922-8432
Website: www.transco.ph

(Sgd.) **ARMANDO N. OCHOA**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - June 7 & 14, 2006)

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000, 526-0100 connecting all departments

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/ contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

Item / Description	Approved Budget	Date/Time		NON-REFUNDABLE FEE
		Pre-Bid Conference	Deadline/ Opening of Bids	
1 lot Supply, Delivery and Installation of Systems Furniture at LBP Cabanatuan Branch	P3,127,000.00	June 15 2006 2:00 pm	June 28, 2006 1:00 PM	P 1,600.00

The Bid Documents shall be available at the General Services Department starting June 7, 2006 upon payment of non-refundable fee indicated above.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at GSD Conference Room, 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar St., Malate, Manila.

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid box located at the abovementioned address

For more information, please call the LBP-Requisitions Management Division at telephone nos. 551-2200 locals 2452, 2453, 7233 & 7234.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI-June 7 & 14, 2006)

1ST postgrad course in medical jurisprudence set June 8-9

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS, FACULTY of Medicine and Surgery – Office of the Dean and the Office of Continuing Medical Education (CME) in collaboration with the Philippine College of Medical Researcher's Foundation and the 3rd Technical Service Battalion (Reserve) will conduct a two-day Post Graduate Course in Medical Jurisprudence and Forensic Medicine with the theme: "The Essentials of Legal Medicine," on June 8 & 9 at the Continuing Medical Education Auditorium, St. Martin de Porres (Medicine) Building of the University of Santo Tomas.

According to Dean Rolando A. Lopez, the honorary chair, this postgraduate course is granted 65 PMA-CME Units, 20 PCP-CME Units, 13 PCS-PSE Units, 13 PPS-CME Units, and 11.5 PAFP CME Units. The Department of Health Circular 2006-0147 grants government physicians to attend on official time. The Department of Interior and Local Governments also allows Municipal Health Officers and government physicians to attend on official time. Dr. Peter Ng, the Course Director, said this is a very important postgraduate course for physicians because there are two aspects of the course: the basic review of medical jurisprudence and the basic review of forensic medicine.

Dr. Christopher Spevak, a doctor-lawyer and the president of the DC Medical Society is the Keynote Speaker. The Postgraduate Faculty includes doctor-lawyers - Dr. Bu C. Castro, Dr. Antonio D. Rebosa. Dr. Elena R. Enriquez, Dr. Peter P. Ng; bioethics expert - Rev. Fr. Jerry Manlangit; high government officials - USEC Jade del Mundo and Asec David J. Lozada Jr.; Judge Philip A. Aguinaldo; and government policy makers - Dr. Rosalie P. Paje and Ms. Florinda G. Tuvillo. For details, please contract Dr. Peter Ng,0916-4530226, or Malou Adriano, 786-1611 loc. 8376. Email: pcmrfoundation@yahoo.com.

OBITUARIES

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OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate

❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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A MESSAGE OF THANKS

WE, the family of the late

FRANCIS CUARESMA CORRAL

express our heartfelt gratitude to our golden relatives and friends whose solidarity, love and sympathy truly make them part of our household. You have not changed with the weather and the wind, and have stood with us in our sorrow. We are the stronger for it. We are truly blessed.

"You have fought the good fight,
you have finished the course,
you have kept the Faith."

PERFECTO EDRAISA TORRES

April 18, 1906 – June 4, 2006

of Botolan, Zambales
peacefully joined his Creator at the age of 100.

His bereaved family: sons and daughters-in-law **Lourdy** and **Lily**, **Jovencio** and **Ching**, **Pedrito** and **Cerly** (†), **Ruben** and **Amar**, **William** and **Lolit**, **Gene** and **Charito**, **Julius** and **Milali**; grandchildren and great-grandchildren and other relatives request pious readers to join in prayers for the repose of Papu's soul.

His remains will lie in state in Mt. Carmel Church, New Manila until Thursday morning, June 8, 2006.

His remains will then be brought to Botolan, Zambales.

Interment will be on Saturday, June 10, 2006 in Botolan.

We design **obituaries** for free.

"I am the resurrection and life. He who believes in Me will live,
even though he dies; and whoever believes in Me will never die."
John 11:25-26

Luz Niguidula De Los Reyes

passed away on June 3, 2006 at 70 years old.

We remember her with deepest love and affection.
Her memory will be treasured forever.
Though we will miss her dearly, we find comfort in knowing that she is now with the LORD.

From her loving husband **VIC**, her children **GIGI MARIETTE** and **Eduardo Cuevas**; **ARLENE ANNE** and **Roderick Castillo**; **VIC DALE** and **Rose Datu**; and **CAROLINE GRACE**, grandchildren **Elizabeth, Edilene, Edward, Emmanuel, Christine, Trina** and **Vic Dale III**, brothers and sister, **Ben, Jaime, Tito** and **Lina N. Gison.**

The viewing is at La Funeraria Paz, Bonifacio Chapel, Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City.
Last memorial service will be held on June 7, 2006 at 7:00 p.m.

Funeral services and interment will be on June 8, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque City
Regular prayer service 7:00 p.m.

Death Notice

MONICA LAROSA LAYLO

Died in the Grace of our Lord on June 2, 2006
at the age of 81.

Her body lies in state at the family residence in Sitio Masagana, Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

Her body will be transferred to Padre Garcia, Batangas for interment on June 10, 2006.

Her family request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

Tel. Nos. Q.C.: 712-3001 • 743-6502; Mla.: 711-6931 to 35

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
ATTY. ENRIQUE C. ARBOLEDA	Chapel C-10 Q.C.	June 09, 2006/9:00 AM	Manila Memorial Park Parañaque
RODOLFO V. MENDOZA	Chapel C-14, Q.C.	June 10, 2006	Himlayang Pilipino

PLDT system allows credit card deals in boondocks

Wireless arrangement also opens up ATM services in remote areas

By Daxim L. Lucas

RETAILERS AND BANKS IN THE remotest areas of the country will soon be linked wirelessly through a new point-of-sale system of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), which uses cell sites instead of phone lines to transmit data.

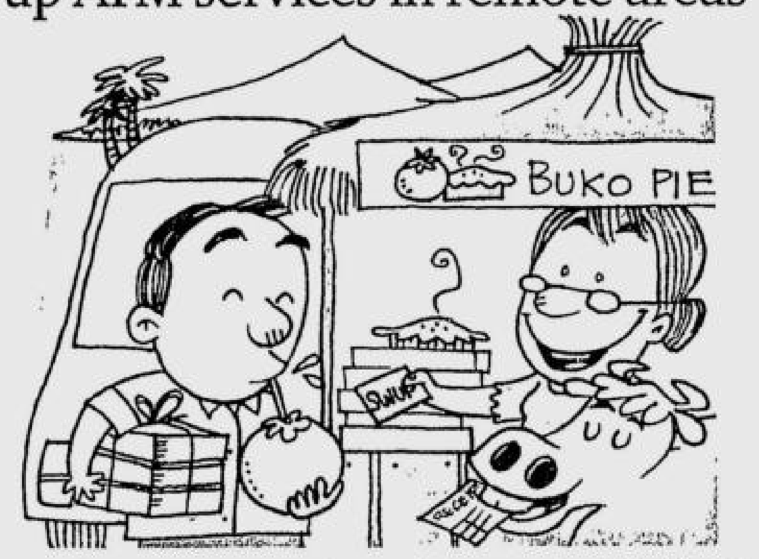
The new service means that establishments even in rural areas will be able to accept credit card payments, while banks not reached by automated teller machine (ATM) networks may link up to them wirelessly.

The product, called Shops Work UnPlugged, or SWUP (pronounced "swoop"), is meant to address the need of retailers and banks for real-time data communications and is part of the company's effort to diversify away from its traditional mobile phone and landline products.

PLDT's corporate business group head Eric R. Alberto said the service would provide retailers and banks with multiple branches an expanded network for real-time monitoring of critical data for their operations.

"SWUP is the first bundled solution that makes wireless cashier point-of-sale and wireless card terminals possible," he said in a statement. "Retailers will now be able reach out to a bigger market in areas where physical connections are unavailable."

"This solution can also expand the frontiers of banking since the technology can be used to come up with wireless ATMs," he added. "You can even have an ATM at the beach."



PLDT said that the service is available in 99.57 percent of areas covered by its mobile phone unit Smart Communications Inc.

The network, using wireless terminals enabled with subscriber identity module (SIM) cards similar to those used in mobile phones, can transmit data at a rate of up to 170 Kilobits per second (Kbps).

The company said this rate is "more than enough for simple data communications involving cashier point-of-sales, card swipe and ATM transactions.

SWUP comes in three variants: Naked SWUP, which is a SIM only variant; SWUP Cash, which is SIM bundled with GPRS/EDGE modem; and SWUP Card, a point-of-sale service bundled with SIM.

PLDT's corporate business solutions head Nerissa S. Ramos said this new product will allow retailers the flexibility to sell or position their stores without being restricted by physical network limitations.

Apart from retailers, she envisions that the product may even be used by taxicabs and delivery boys.

"There is the security provided by the SIM and security inherent in Smart's GPRS/EDGE network where there is a dedicated Access Point Name assigned per company," Ramos said, explaining its security features. "It does not go through the Internet, thus protecting clients from viruses and hackers."

Peso stumbles anew on threat of Fed hike

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY STUMBLED anew against the US dollar, spooked by an increased probability that the US Federal Reserve would further raise its key interest rates later this month.

After moving farther away from the P53:$1 barrier late last week, the peso shed 11.5 centavos to close at 52.84 yesterday from Monday's 52.725 against the greenback.

"The market is still driven by sentiment in the global markets regarding the possibility of global interest rate hikes," said Estelito Biacora, vice president at Bank of the Philippine Islands and director of financial markets association ACI Philippines. "The market is looking at the strengthening of the US dollar versus major currencies … related to the possibility of another interest rate hike (by the US Fed) on June 29."

This developed as Ben Bernanke, the new chair of the United States Federal Reserve, issued a statement saying that the Fed must remain vigilant to ensure that inflation would stay under control, even as the growth in the world's largest economy was slowing down.

Analysts said the comments increased the probability that the US Fed would raise its benchmark rate for the 17th straight time to 5.25 percent when it meets this month.

Other Asian currencies likewise tumbled against the greenback after Bernanke's comments.

Higher interest rates in the US implied that assets denominated in local currencies would be less attractive to investors.

Yesterday, the volume at the local spot foreign exchange market amounted to $367.5 million.

The government's fiscal and economic program for the year assumed a peso-dollar exchange rate range of 51 to 53 against the US dollar.

At the Fort, Britain acquires property for new embassy

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

MEGAWORLD CORP. HAS AGREED to sell a portion of its 50-hectare McKinley Hill township project in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig to the British Embassy, the company said in a statement.

The British government will build a new embassy building on the site but no timetable has been set for the construction.

Megaworld officials declined to reveal the value of the deal, which involves the purchase of a 1.2-hectare lot.

The British Embassy, currently based in Makati City, is among the first institutions to locate its operations on McKinley Hill.

Megaworld is also in talks with foreign investors who will build international schools on McKinley Hill.

McKinley Hill's master plan divides the project into residential, office, retail and educational or institutional blocks. The first residential phase, dubbed McKinley Hill Village, targets a high-end market. Since its launch in May 2004, it has sold 75 percent of its 482 lots.

Megaworld is also set to launch new projects this year, which would use up P4 to P5 billion earmarked for capital expenditures.

Also, the firm is eyeing British companies that specialize in business process outsourcing and IT-enabled services as prospective locators entitled to various tax perks at the McKinley Hill Cyberpark.

The 35-hectare office block was approved as a special economic zone by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in August 2005. A total of 200,000 square meters of high-tech office space has been provided for BPO and information technology companies.

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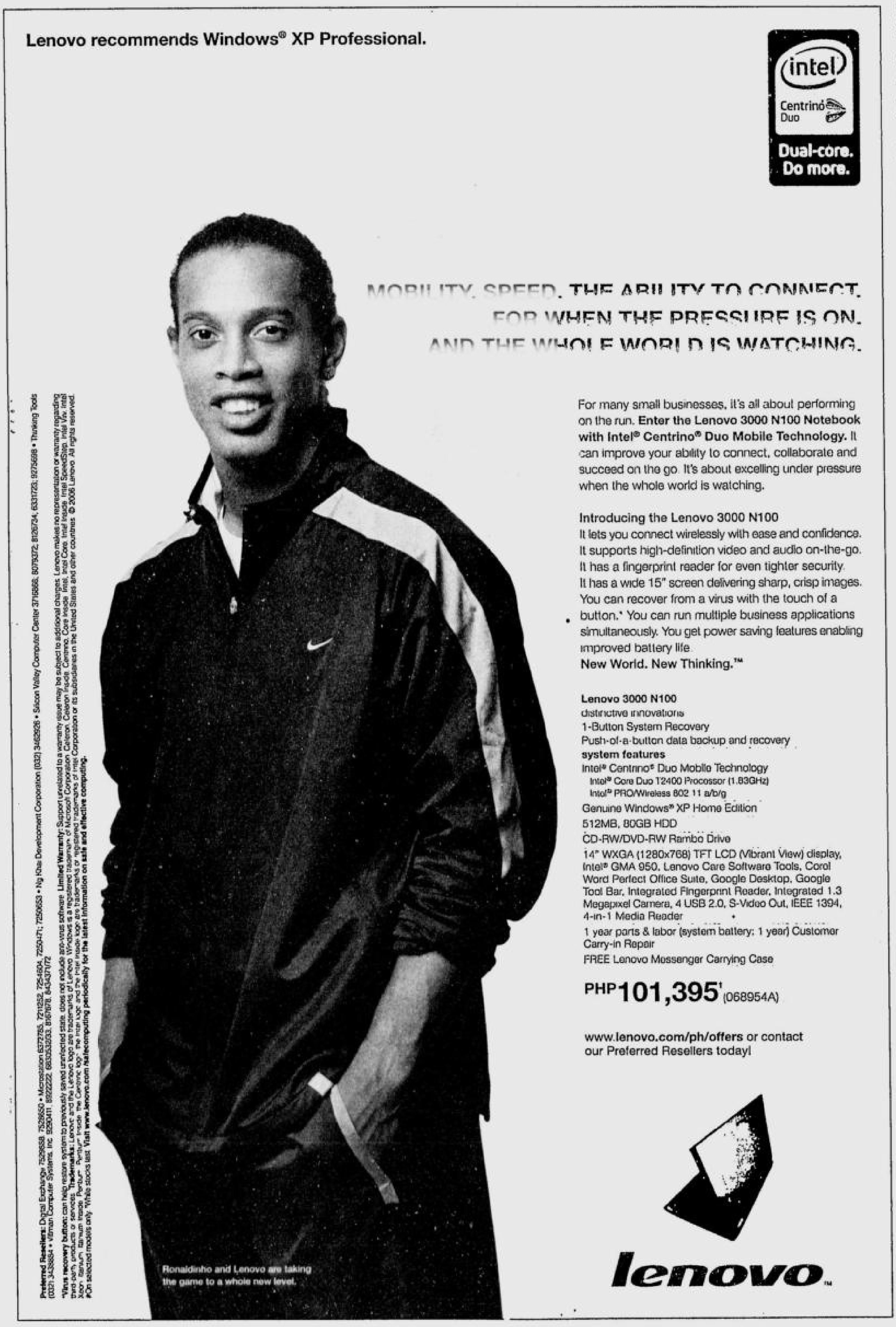
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MOTORING

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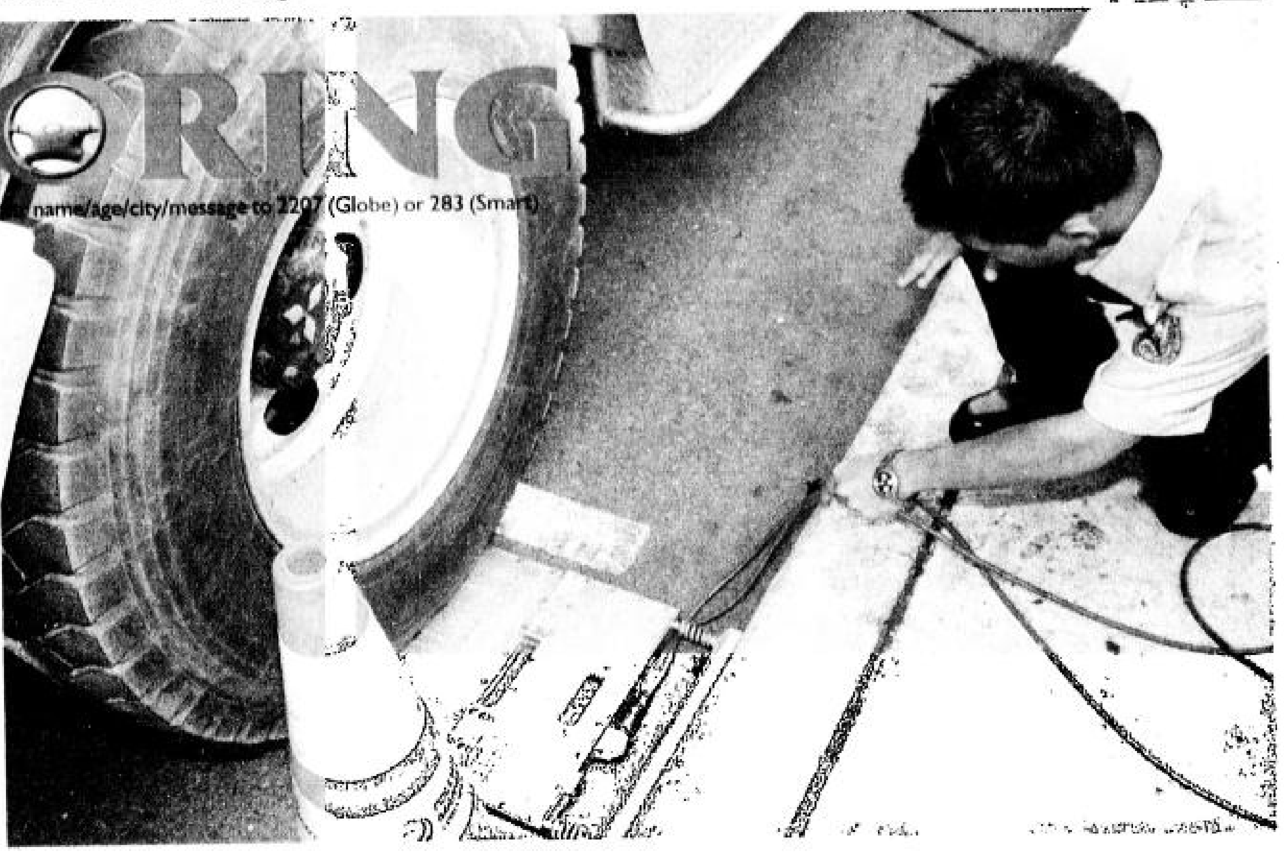
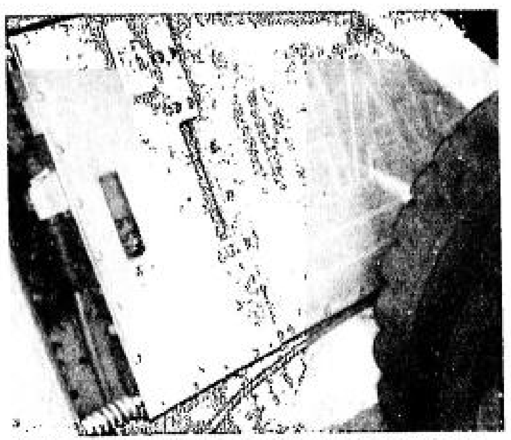
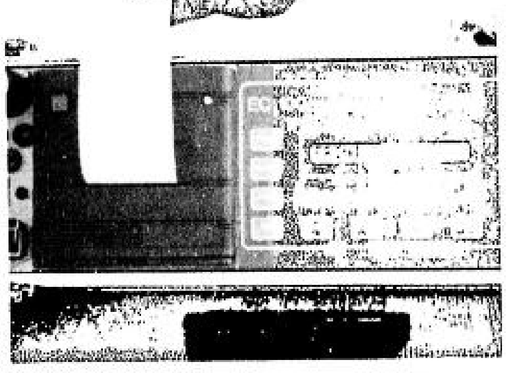
Overloaded vehicles not be taken lightly, say enforcers


BUT have you weighed the driver himself? An enforcer checks a truck's weight.


NOT for the lighthearted: a closer look at a digital weighing scale


BUT does it come with a fortune cookie? Printouts can be requested

By Tessa R. Salazar

YOU CAN ALWAYS CHOOSE the car you'll be driving or riding in, but you can never choose the vehicles you'll run side by side with or meet from the opposite lane.

So should you be as worried as the traffic enforcers on the lookout for vans, buses and trucks that have exceeded their maximum prescribed payloads?

The enforcers say you should, because once these rolling behemoths encounter mechanical troubles, most likely they'll swerve either left or right—in your direction or to the other hapless motorist's side. And then there's the bulging cargo raring to spill out from the vehicle's belly... Pity the motorists following the troublemaker.

Overloaded vehicles

There are 28,266 kilometers of roads and 7,300 km of bridges criss-crossing the country. During a press presentation of weighbridges at the 84-km stretch of the North Luzon Expressway last week, law enforcers presented Department of Public Works and Highways data that showed of the 970,000 recorded accidents nationwide, 120,000 were caused by overloaded vehicles, or by vehicles that carried loads not

OVERLOADED/ B2-2

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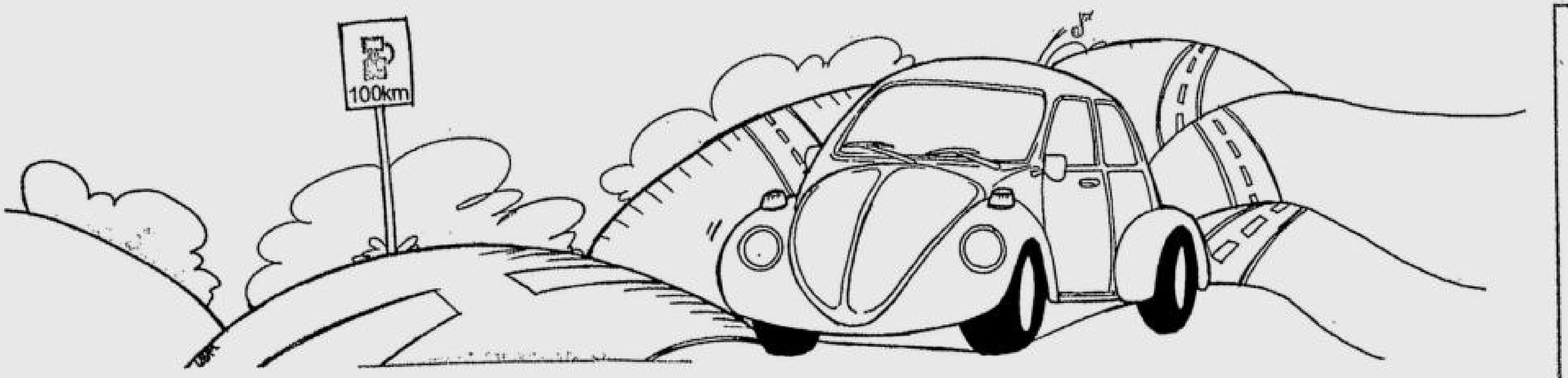

Getting more out of your fuel

WITH THE CONTINUING RISE OF oil prices, one would think that there is nothing much to do but bear it and grin. But there is something that can be done. So here now is the ultimate road challenge: would you like to be able to travel an extra 100 kilometers on a tank load of gasoline or diesel? You can if you are able to drive more economically, and can get at least 2 kilometers more out of every liter of fuel you consume.

The Automobile Association Philippines (AAP), formerly Philippine Motor Association (PMA) strongly advocates the promotion and advancement of Philippine motoring as one of its mandates. As such, it has always pushed for more efficient and effective ways to curb the growing oil problem besetting the country today with practical tips that could help ease the motorist's burden with their fuel consumption.

The starting point is to be conscious of, and find out how many kilometers per liter you are able to get with the way you currently drive. Load up a full tank and zero your trip meter. After a week of driving, load to a full tank again, and divide the kilometers shown on your trip meter by the liters loaded, so you will get your kilometers per liter.

Then, drive for another week according to the following suggestions:

1 Keep your rpm as low as possible (without lugging your engine). This means making use of your car's tachometer (or rpm indicator) so that you can determine rpm levels when you can already upshift as quickly as possible. In many cases, this shift-point is when 2000 rpm is reached. In vehicles without tachometers, it is possible to "sense" when this shift-point is reached. Light-footed acceleration in the case of cars with automatic transmission will produce the same results, as you will be able to determine at what rpm levels you can back off on the accelerator pedal to induce up-shifting.

2 Maintain your car's forward momentum. This means **anticipating** traffic and road conditions (even 3 to 4 cars ahead) so that you can **minimize unnecessary braking**—which not only wastes forward momentum energy, but also consumes added fuel to get back to your momentum speed. (One technique is to use your horn and/or flash your headlights to warn and keep pedestrians and vehicles from intruding onto your path.)

3 Make use of the gliding power of your car (especially vehicles with automatic transmissions). This means **backing off early** when approaching traffic buildup, or intersections where traffic lights are on red, and even speed humps (instead of still stepping on the accelerator, only to brake hard at the last moment).

4 Make sure your tires are always fully inflated, because under-inflated tires increase rolling resistance, requiring more energy and thus more fuel.

5 Drive with a light and steady foot on the accelerator pedal, avoiding unnecessary acceleration—unless you have to really drive in a hurry. Never pump the accelerator pedal (some drivers with nervous ticks or who are "hyper" do so).

6 Your car's engine must be properly tuned so that your fuel is burned efficiently.

7 You should develop the "art and science of overtaking"—which means alertly assessing road conditions even 3 to 4 cars ahead, keeping your car's momentum, and accelerating (or down-shifting if necessary) only as lightly as required. By anticipating, it is sometimes possible to just back off when you spot a temporary traffic ahead, and overtake still in the same gear (or down-shifting only one gear down)—instead of braking heavily (or even stopping behind a stopped jeepney) and down-shifting 2 or 3 gears lower. Otherwise, overtaking is a major cause of increased fuel consumption.

8 Cruise at the right speed. Because of the so-called "coefficient of drag"—the most economical cruising speed is the slowest which your vehicle can run in top gear (without lugging or underrevving your engine). For auto transmissions, this means observing at what speed (and rpm) your car will upshift to its highest gear, and cruising 2 to 3 kph above that shift point, to stay in top gear. Depending on your car's final gear ratios, in most cases this will be between 60 and 70 kph (so you must also give due consideration in not being a road hog to faster-running vehicles).

9 Avoid engine braking unless absolutely necessary, because this spikes up your rpm and consumes more fuel. The braking system of today's cars no longer require downshifting/engine braking anyway.

10 Do not rev up your engine before shutting it off; this is completely unnecessary and just consumes more fuel.

By observing these suggestions, you will be surprised that you might just be able to get two additional 50-km round-trip commutes to work per tank load of fuel.

There is nothing we can do about the global supply and demand dynamics that determine fuel prices, but there is something we can do in the face of very high fuel prices—and that is to drive more economically.

Overloaded vehicles not be . . .

From page B2-1

appropriate to their design.

Enforcers explained that if a truck, trailer or van exceeds the permissible single axle load of 13,500 kg or 13.5 metric tons per axle, or if a vehicle exceeds the maximum allowed gross vehicle weight as stipulated in Republic Act 8794 (and its regulations published in 2001), then the vehicle is considered overweight.

An overloaded vehicle, the enforcers stressed, are at risk of suffering mechanical breakdowns, premature tire failure, and would require a longer braking distance. Its traveling speed would most likely fall below the minimum required speed limit, and would be prone to cargo spillage.

"It's a big safety issue," said Marcel Mercado, superintendent, Traffic Motorist Assistance of Tollways Management Corp. "Based on our experience and statistics, most overloaded trucks are more prone to accidents such as brake failure. Overloading is actually more costly for the truck owners when it comes to maintenance."

He adds that the condition of a frequently overloaded truck would deteriorate and depreciate much faster, usually way before any fair return on investment is reached.

How they work

NLEX executives showed the Inquirer how teams on weighing stations usually worked. Six enforcement teams are on the lookout on 12 identified sites with six sets of portable weighing scales. Three more portable weighing scales are stationed in three fixed sites, one at a weighing site in Balintawak northbound, another at Bocaue southbound, and then another in San Fernando southbound.

The enforcers already carry with them profiles of suspected overweight vehicles, which include trucks that extend their sidewalls beyond the original design or those that cover the truck's upper walls.

Suspected overweight vehicles are apprehended and positioned on top of the weigh bridge. The weighing system is automated and includes a printout of the actual weight of the vehicle.

When proven overloaded, the driver's license and the vehicle plate number are confiscated, in accordance to Republic Act 4136, which stipulates that an overloaded vehicle can either be impounded or its license plates confiscated as a form of "technical impounding."

An amount equivalent to 25 percent of the motor vehicle user's charge or vehicle registration fee is imposed on trucks and trailers found overloading.

Raul L. Ignacio, vice president of the O and M Assurance Services of the MNTC, said that many gravel and sand trucks carried 150 percent of its prescribed gross vehicle weight.

"It would be more costly on the part of the owners when an overweight vehicle loses control," he added.

Road deterioration

Road engineers say that overloading also leads to premature deterioration of roads. Overloaded vehicles can cut the road's useful life by as much as 60 percent, considering that an overloaded vehicle can exponentially damage the pavement below it four times more.

Mere looks, however, can be deceiving. Not all vehicles that seem to fit the visual profile of being overloaded actually are. Take, for instance, one truck that had its upper walls covered and was routinely apprehended by weigh bridge teams during the press presentation. That truck turned out to be carrying empty PET bottles, and was sent off without further ado.

Aside from the portable weighing scales found in NLEX, the DPWH has more than 21 working weighbridges spread out in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Twenty-one weigh bridges to ensure that the remaining 35,000 km or so of Philippine roads are safe from overloaded vehicles? That averages out to one weigh bridge for every 1,667 km of roads.

With those odds, motorists driving outside the NLEX are well advised to keep their eyes and ears open and just steer clear of these lumbering giants.

Keep their phones, handy, too. Motorists who suspect they're driving alongside or are tailing an overloaded vehicle (be it a truck, van, bus, jeep, or any vehicle carrying loads not appropriate for their design) can call hotline numbers (02)35000. Pull over to the side of the road before making the call, of course. Better yet, have a companion make that call.

Rosy talk

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

THE UNWILLING WILL HAVE TO ACcept it.

Everybody's saying it already, from Detroit to Denmark, from Tokyo to Toronto, except the one that's been the subject of all this rosy talk.

Not even the big bosses at Toyota Motor Philippines like Ito-san, Ty-san, Nakashima-san, Isla-san, Socco-san from his Singapore base, or even Dexter/Sonny-san/Sherwin/Raymond/Apin/Jing/Elijah-san are saying it.

But like it or not, Toyota will become world No. 1 shortly. Officially, that is.

It's been the talk of the town since June 2005.

Toyota will be the last to say it.

Its preamble will have to crumble soon?

I don't think so.

It can always retain it: Be humble at all times. And still keep the title: No. 1 worldwide.

Toyota has been humble all these years, but the inevitable can't be stopped: Topple General Motors from the top.

The New York Times has said it. And when the newspaper of the world says it, no one disputes it. It's gospel truth.

In the fiscal year ended March 31, the New York Times reported that Toyota posted worldwide a 17.2 percent jump in net profit. That translates to a record 1.37 trillion yen (US$12.1 billion).

The record was its sixth consecutive in six years, enough to make it one of the world's most profitable manufacturers.

In its vehicle sales forecast, Toyota said its entire group, including Daihatsu Motor and the truck maker Hino, will sell 8.45 million vehicles this fiscal year, 476,000 more than last year.

That's more than enough to dislodge the cash-strapped, bankruptcy-bound GM as the world's largest carmaker.

While it sold 9.17 million vehicles last year, analysts expect GM to fare badly this year and, sadly, lose the top position it had held for 75 years.

GM is still struggling to recover from a US$10.6 billion loss amid labor tension and soaring gasoline prices.

It showed signs of stirrings in the first quarter, but if GM were to sell 8 percent fewer cars and Toyota exceeded its projections, then Toyota's on the way to becoming the world's largest automaker.

Said Katsuaki Watanabe, president of Tokyo Motor Corp.: "Toyota's performance demonstrated the strength of our company's ongoing operational efforts."

In Asia alone, Toyota sales increased from 47,000 to 880,000, mainly due to the strong performance of IMV (Innovative International Multipurpose Vehicle) models, like the Innova, Fortuner and Hi-Lux.

"Our business environment will remain severe, with a significant increase in raw material prices and competition intensifying," Watanabe said. "However, we wish to achieve results that exceed our latest financial results while continuing investment for future growth."

Through the years, Toyota has always been moving forward because it wills to move forward.

How many among us have that same trait?

* * *

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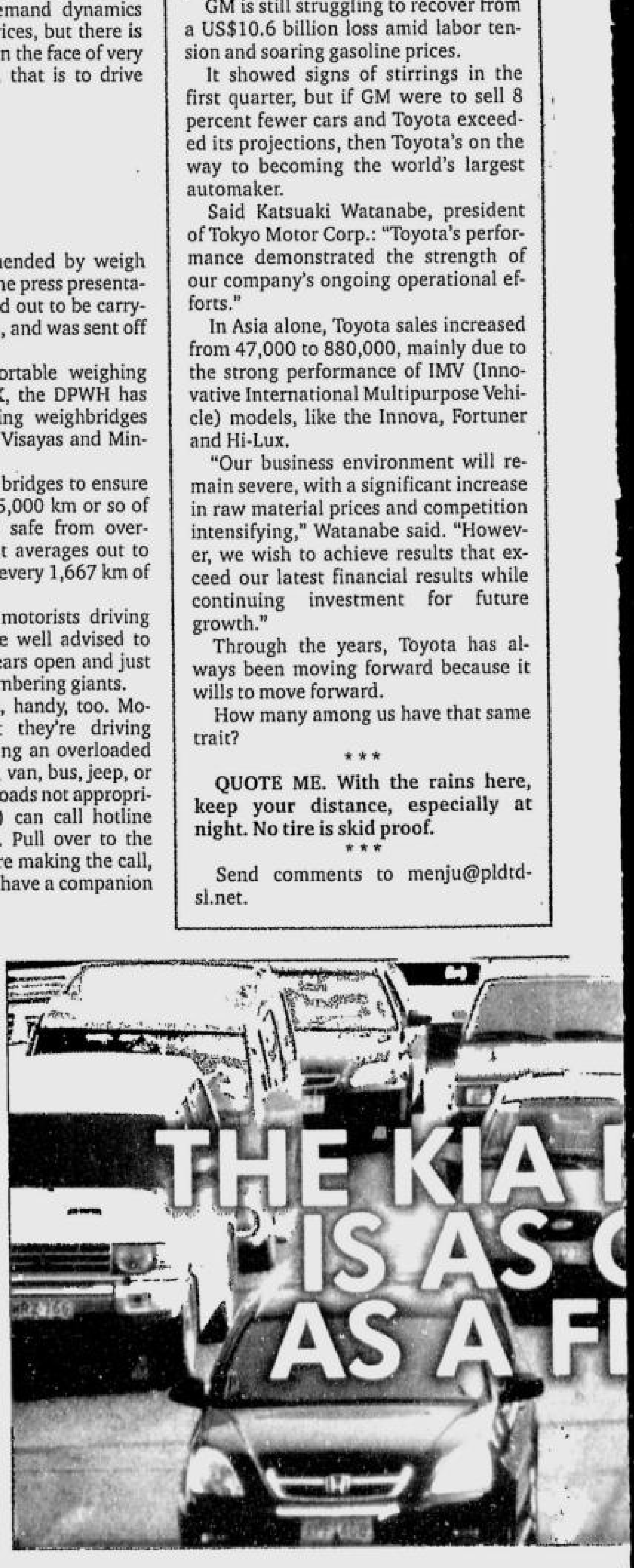


Accent on fuel economy

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

HYUNDAI Accent CRDi in blue onyx

DIESEL ENGINES ARE USUALLY ASSOCIATED with big land transportation workhorses such as trucks, buses, vans, full-size SUVs and public utility vehicles. So when Hyundai Asia Resources Inc. (Hari) chose to launch the common rail direct injection (CRDi) diesel Accent instead of the gasoline version, it created a new niche in the lucrative compact sedan market.

At the same time, by coming up with the only CRDi compact car on the market, Hyundai consolidated its position as the leading brand in affordable CRDi vehicles. Aside from the Accent, Hari offers the Starex CRDi minivan (Best Entry Level Multipurpose Vehicle winner in the 2004 Car of the Year contest), the Santa Fe and Tucson CRDi sport utility vehicles, the Matrix CRDi hatchback and the Getz diesel subcompact.

Mobility

Sure, there are other CRDi cars available, but they are BMW and Audi products that have bigger engine displacements and cost millions of pesos more. By putting CRDi vehicles within the reach of the average car buyer, Hyundai helps promote the nation's mobility and energy conservation programs.

This is because CRDi technology greatly improves the performance and fuel efficiency of the diesel engine, reduces its exhaust emissions and lowers NVH (noise, vibrations and harshness) to a level almost commensurate with that of a gasoline engine. According to Hari, the Accent's state-of-the-art diesel engine was designed and developed at Hyundai's R&D center in Russelsheim, Germany.

Efficiency

In these days of endlessly soaring oil prices, the fuel efficiency of a car assumes primary importance. In the Fuel Economy Run conducted by the Department of Energy last May 13, the Accent averaged 19.01 km per liter. Granted, the Toyota Vios 1.3 manual transmission topped the list by running 22.16 km per liter, but it has a smaller, less powerful engine than the Accent's 1.5. The BMW 520d, which has a 2.0-liter CRDi engine, averaged 21.07 km per liter, but hey, this is a Beemer which costs more than four million bucks! As for the Kia Picanto, which ran 20.80 km per liter of gasoline, it is a lightweight minicar while the Accent is a bigger, heavier compact with a 1.5 engine compared to the Picanto's tiny 1.1-liter engine.

In the certification tests conducted by the Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi), the organization of motoring journalists that manages the annual Car of the Year program, the Accent CRDi posted 20 km per liter in constant-speed highway driving and 17 km per liter in heavy-traffic city driving although the air conditioner was running.

By the way, diesel fuel costs at least P3 less per liter than unleaded gasoline.

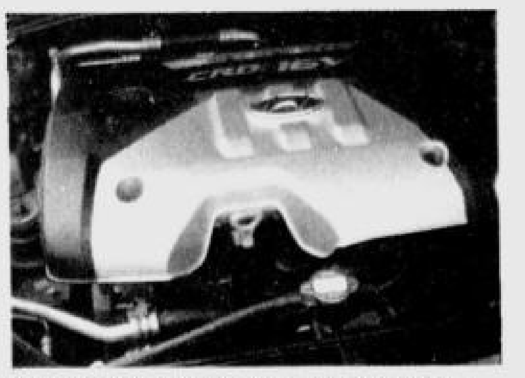
Fast

But class-leading fuel economy isn't the only thing that the Accent CRDi has to offer. If you think that Hyundai sacrifices performance on the altar of fuel thriftiness, you are wrong. The Accent is incredibly fast, with exceptional acceleration and split-second engine responsiveness due to its variable geometry turbo (VGT). Its 1.5-liter twin cam 16-valve CRDi powerplant delivers 110 ps /4,000 rpm and more significantly, massive torque peaking at 24.0 kg-m/1,900-2,750 rpm. This enormous pulling power is why the Accent CRDi tackles steep uphill roads with more *abilidad* than other cars.

The Accent CRDi has impressive handling and steering characteristics, thanks in part to its smooth-shifting 5-speed manual transmission and MacPherson strut front suspension with coupled torsion beam axle at the rear. On the road, the CRDi engine runs almost as silently as a gasoline one without the noisy clatter and shaking produced by ordinary diesels.

Tempted

In fact, the Accent is so much fun to drive that you are constantly tempted to hit speeds exceeding 120 kph. A word of caution, though: the Accent's light weight and brakes (no ABS and only drums in the rear) do not ensure complete control at very high speeds. It would be safer—and more fuel-efficient—to maintain normal speeds.



The ACCENT'S 1.5-liter CRDi powerplant
PHOTO BY AIDA SEVILLA MENDOZA

The cabin comfortably seats four including driver but five occupants would be a tight fit. The rear seat splits 60/40 to increase luggage space and has a center armrest with cupholders. The interior's ergonomics are unexceptional except for the gear stick, which shifts into reverse toward the left upward like a European car's.

While keyless entry with alarm, fog lamps, air con and power windows and door locks are standard, the Accent has no airbag/s, no ABS, drum brakes in the rear and a pipsqueak horn. The Accent's body design will not win awards for esthetics. Other compact cars in the Accent's P768,000 price range look snazzier and offer higher specs and more safety features. But they don't have the Accent's CRDi advantage.

* * *

TODAY'S BUMPER STICKER: Better to understand a little than to misunderstand a lot.

MOTORSCOPE

Most fuel-efficient car in RP

THE TOYOTA VIOS AND THE INNOVA ARE THE MOST FUEL-EFFICIENT VEHICLES IN THE PASSENGER car (PC) and commercial vehicle (CV) segments respectively, based on the results of the recently concluded 2006 Fuel Economy Run by the Department of Energy (DoE). Both Toyota models are also the country's best selling vehicles to date.

Last May 13, the DoE held its 5th fuel economy test from its headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City to Lipa City and back, with the support of the Traffic Management Group, the Citizen Traffic Action, Filcar and Shell Philippines. Twenty-three passenger cars and commercial vehicles from 8 car manufacturers and distributors participated, despite the bad weather conditions brought about by Typhoon "Caloy." Aside from Toyota Motor Philippines, the country's No. 1 automotive company, Mitsubishi, Volvo, Honda, Kia, Isuzu, Hyundai and BMW also sent their representative models.

After the 162.8-kilometer run, the Vios 1.3 J gas manual transmission achieved 22.16 km per liter consumption in the gasoline category, making it the most fuel-efficient car in the country. The other 10 entry vehicles in the gasoline categories included the Kia Picanto 1.1-liter MT with 20.8 km per liter mileage, and the Honda City 1.3-liter automatic transmission with total consumption of 17.5 km per liter.

Toyota's best-selling vehicle, the Innova, with 2.5-liter direct injection common rail diesel (D4D) engine, also posted high results with total consumption of 16.55 km per liter. The Isuzu Crosswind 2.5-liter averaged 16.15 liters.

Exclusive 1-year deferred payment plan

OWNING A BRAND-NEW BMW IS MADE EASIER WITH THE NEW FINANCING PROGRAM FOR BMW customers—one-year deferred payment plan for all brand-new BMW cars.

Brand-new BMW buyers who avail of this payment plan will enjoy unmatched financial flexibility.

With a minimum (50 percent) down payment, customers can choose to begin making monthly payments from 13th month onward. The remaining balance can then be stretched for up to 24 months for a maximum total loan term of three years.

By availing of this one-year payment holiday, BMW buyers can benefit from better cash flow control and continue to make other investments work in their favor while enjoying the sheer driving pleasure of their brand-new BMW.

The payment plan is available from June 1 to 30 at Klassik BMW (Quezon Avenue, Quezon City), Autohaus BMW (Libis, Quezon City), Autozentrum BMW (Alabang), Prestige Cars BMW (Makati), Premiere Cars BMW (Pampanga) and Performance BMW (Cebu).

Emergency car care package

KNOWING HOW FILIPINOS VALUE THE SAFETY OF THEIR FAMILIES, BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK (BPIFSB) in partnership with Ibero Asistencia recently launched the Drive Your Dream Auto Loan Emergency Car Care Package at Speedzone in Fort Bonifacio's Global City.

The event, hosted by sports enthusiast and TV personality Reema Chanco, gave guests details of the Drive Your Dream Auto Loan Emergency Car Care Package and offered advice on worry-free driving and road safety.

This emergency car care package is a special feature offered to clients availing of BPIFSB's auto loan service. Clients who availed of the auto loan starting April 1 are automatically enrolled to the roadside assistance service provided by Ibero Asistencia and may avail of vehicle or personal assistance in case of emergency on the road.

Vehicle assistance includes towing, minor on-site repairs, and vehicle rescue. Personal Assistance such as hotel accommodation, alternate means of transportation, relay of urgent messages, information on hospital addresses and telephone numbers, arrangement for ambulance assistance, or hospital admission may also be provided to the member.

The emergency car care package applies to brand-new cars and is co-terminus with the loan.

Also during the event, Asian Formula 3 racer JP Tuason gave a few tips on how to be safe on the road safety. Car aficionado Brad Turvey also graced the event and also shared his insights on road safety.

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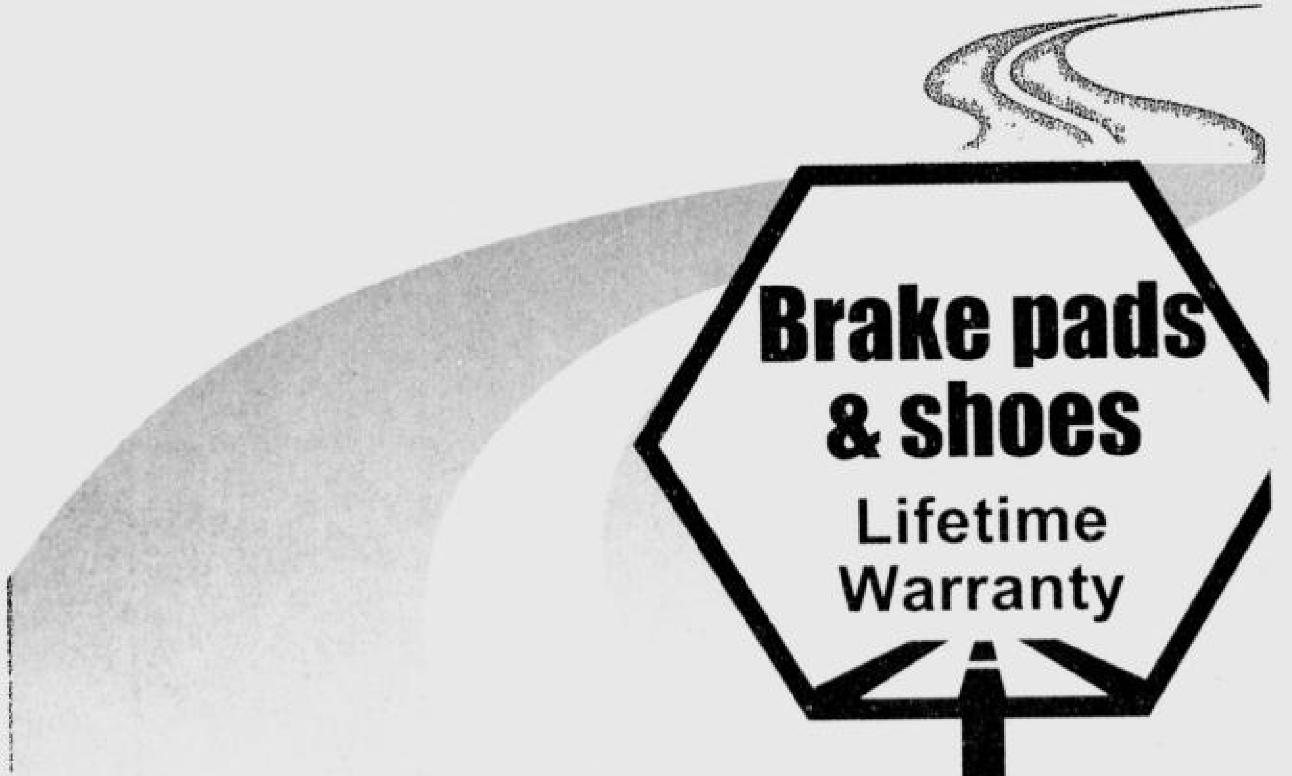

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Cebu Auto Show showcases the latest in auto industry

KIA'S Rio Sedan made its public debut at the auto show

NEW MODEL SUCH AS HONDA'S 8TH generation Civic, Hyundai Santa Fe and Kia's Rio Sedan made its public debut in the Cebu Auto Show 2006 held at the Ayala Center Cebu.

Kia Motors also held a mini fashion show and a soft launch of the Rio Sedan and all stocks of the Cebu-based dealer were already sold out during the show.

Kia Motor Philippines marketing manager Chut Velasquez believes that the sales of their Cebu dealership will substantially improve with the help of just concluded Cebu Auto Show.

Other exhibitors were also encouraged with actual on-site sales and reservations made during the show.

Auto show guests

Over 28,000 visitors trekked and braved the afternoon heat to visit the four-day auto show which was staged by the same group that brought the Manila International Auto Show 2006, the country's biggest and only international auto show which was held recently.

Also on display were the latest models from Ford, GM, Isuzu, Nissan and Suzuki. Over 50 cars were displayed in the mall and tent pavilion including customized cars owned by Cebu's motoring aficionados.

CUSTOM car winner at the Cebu auto show

Highlights

A custom car show competition was held and led by veteran car show judge John Escobar who flew in from Manila for the occasion. Award categories included the coveted Best of Show Award.

Indoor and outdoor exhibitions, show cars, sound-offs, celebrity appearances and fashion shows were among the many highlights.

Gracing the opening of the show were Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia and Cebu Chamber of Commerce president Francis Monera. Garcia welcomed the organizer's initiatives to showcase the best of what the automotive industry has to offer in Cebu.

Cleaner engines with new Petron Carbon Flush

AMID HIGH OIL PRICES AND IN SUPPORT of the government's energy conservation program, market leader Petron Corp. introduces a timely innovation called Petron Carbon Flush. The automotive product reduces emissions and improves fuel-efficiency. Since the product is nontoxic and bio-degradable, it is easy to handle and environment-friendly.

A clean-running engine is the best solution to achieve fuel economy. Proper maintenance of your vehicle is the first step in getting the most out of your gasoline. Petron Carbon Flush is an added tool in your car to maximize fuel economy through clean engine power.

Added mechanical stress

It is normal for carbon deposits to build throughout an engine with age, but there is added mechanical stress when driving in stop and go traffic. This puts the engine under even more strain, resulting in added carbon build up in the intake and exhaust manifolds.

An engine with excessive amounts of carbon lodged in its intake cannot breathe freely. The combustion process is hampered and the fuel and air mixture isn't optimized. This results in unburned fuel, a less efficient engine and a bigger dent in our pockets.

Petron Carbon Flush safely removes carbon deposits resulting in a cleaner burning engine and therefore adding savings in fuel and better gas mileage. When used, it cleans and protects against carbon deposits, allowing our vehicles to perform at their best and yet maintain fuel efficiency.

Results of field tests

In recent field tests, smoke emissions of vehicles injected with Carbon Flush showed immediate visible improvement and a reduction of emissions by as much as 70 percent. More efficient combustion also resulted in fuel savings of nearly 10 percent.

Petron Carbon Flush is injected into a running engine as a fine spray. Microscopic particles are then carried throughout the inner workings of the fuel injection system, breaking down carbon deposits throughout each stage of the four-stroke combustion cycle. During each intake, compression, combustion and exhaust cycle, Petron Carbon Flush actively breaks down carbon deposits. The loosened carbon particles are then ejected in the fourth cycle and carried outside of the engine along with the exhaust gases.

Having Petron Carbon Flush in each stage of the process cleans your engine through each step of the way, eliminating harmful carbon deposits. With continuous use, this ensures a cleaner burn and a more efficient engine and bigger savings, all without sacrificing performance. Petron Carbon Flush is initially available in 21 Petron service stations and will offer it to motorists free for one month.

Latest technologies

"A clean engine is an efficient engine. The launch of our Petron Carbon Flush is part of a larger effort to promote energy conservation by providing our customers the latest technologies to enhance engine performance, and Petron will continue to implement programs to ease the burden of rising fuel prices," said Nicasio I. Alcantara, chair of Petron.

Petron president and CEO Khalid D. Al Faddagh stated that as industry leader, Petron will continue to drive its fuel research and technology efforts to give consumers more value for money. "At the same time, we continue to set the standards in terms of locally produced clean air fuels, Petron Carbon Flush is another example of how we harness new technology to respond to the needs of our customers," he said.

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** Quoted from Tito Hormoso's Not So Fast column: http:/www.bworldonline.com/BW040506*

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Back to school

Part 2

to be young • to be you • to be young • To be you!

Think of this issue as your campus arsenal, helping you to arm yourself with enough ammunition to face the new school year. We have tips on making a good impression on your teachers, making sure you get the sleep that you need, packing your 'kikay' kit, choosing the gadgets that can make a difference, keeping yourself safe on the road to and from your campus, and making the most out of your life in school. Attack your first day with gusto, soldiers. And don't forget to have fun

How to make a good impression without really trying

By Danicar Mariano
2bU! Correspondent

OKAY, SO YOU'RE ALL PSYCHED up and ready to meet your classmates. But how about your teachers? After all, in the politics of school, the teacher is the one that has the final say on your grade—and when it comes to that, as in everything else, the concept of Blink is operative. No matter how exhaustive or meticulous or objective the grading process is, the first impression you make, goes a long, long way.

Don't let this scare you, however. Here are tips on "how to impress your teacher without really trying." Of course, therein lies the operative phrase: without really trying. That's really one of the most basic premise. As the movie "Hitch" goes: "you cannot use what you do not have, so if you're shy, be shy, if you're assertive, be assertive," but the point is to get it across to your teacher at the earliest possible point that you are an A-worthy student.

> Dress smart, be helpful, listen well in class

It's not what you do, it's how you do it

Many of our decisions are made on an unconscious level. Eighty percent of communication is, in fact, nonverbal more than the verbal, and that is what we trust more. It is literally not what you do, or say, but how you do or say it.

Dress smart

What does it take to look intelligent? Vertical stripes give the appearance of togetherness and righteousness. A pale shade of yellow also gives off an intellectual appeal. Pink is said to be ideal to wear in court hearings or on first days, as it makes you look sympathetic. Blue, on the other-hand, gives the impression of eloquence, calm and stability. Try to avoid colors that are too flashy or loud on the first day, like blood red or neon orange or slime green, unless that is what you can live up to—being a loud but brilliant genius student for the rest of the semester. Try not wear something too revealing, as it may give off the wrong impression.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G RODRIGUEZ

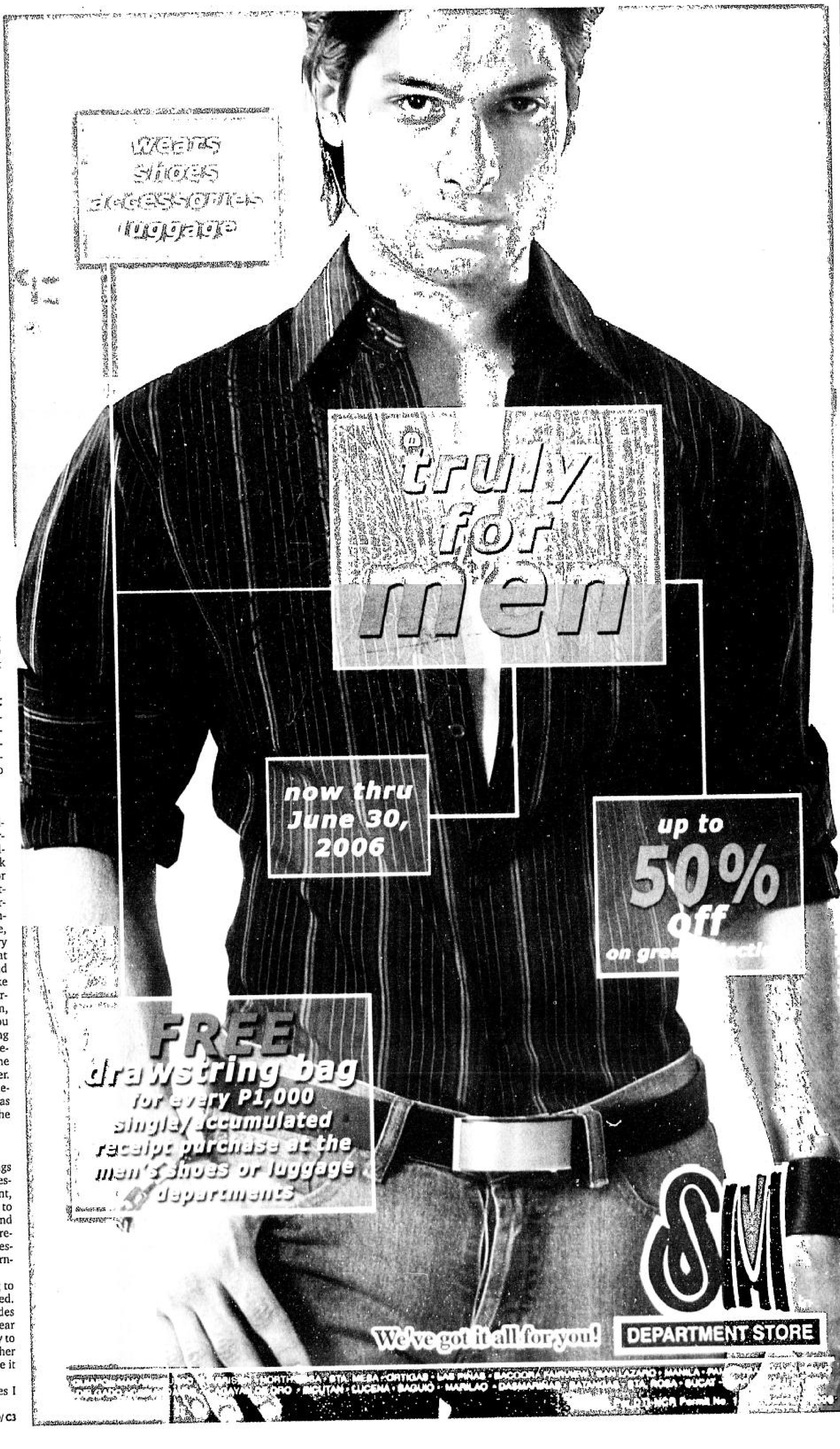
Be Zen

Of course, one of the most important things when making a good first impression is presence. Presence is being there in the moment, attentive to what is going on, and sensitive to the needs and moods of the people around you. It is also a condition of openness, wherein you show that you are an empty cup, a vessel enthusiastic to be filled with new learning.

A huge part of this, of course is learning to listen. Listening, of course, cannot be faked. The Chinese ideogram from listening alludes to an ear, and a heart. Subordinate to the ear is the self. This shows us that we should try to understand the frame of mind of the other person as the other person, and not reduce it to our vision.

In one of the hardest undergrad classes I

HOW TO/ C3



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Advice for the wise

By Pam Pastor

THEY'VE BEEN THERE, they've done that. Now, what advice can they give you?

2bU! asked graduates to spill the one thing they wish they knew when they were still in school, and at the same time give students tips on making the most out of their scholarly life.

"It's okay to be passionate about whatever ignites your imaginations because if you dedicate yourself to that, you'll have an exciting, fulfilled life, whether or not as a teenager you were popular or got good grades or had a boyfriend or girlfriend."—**Jonjon Rufino, 31, part-time businessman/full-time adrenaline junkie**

"Don't put your teachers on a pedestal. After all, they are also human. Sometimes, they make mistakes."—**Jugs, vocalist, itchyworms**

"Heartbreak is not the end of the world."—**Howie Severino, 44, journalist**

"It's never too early to start."—**Jet Valle**

"*Hindi masamang mag*-absent *kung talagang* needed. Perfect attendance *kasi ako nung* high school and college. *Sana* na-experience ko mag-absent. Also, keep and take as many photos as you can—with you in them—for your yearbook."—**Giles Aquino, 25**

"We should act normal in front of the opposite sex, and not be like nervous wrecks."—**Irene Pineda, 31, designer**

"Don't make unnecessary enemies. They could end up as your clients 10 years later and bite you in the ass. Of course, some people, for some reason, like that."—**Noel Nieva**

"Master the basics—grammar, diction, composition, critical reasoning, math, science, history. Armed with these plus a never-ending supply of *sipag, tiyaga* and good manners, you will go places."—**Jules, account manager**

"Learn a foreign language. Develop your contacts in school. They will be the ones who will help you in your career. Don't forget to thank your mentors who helped you become who you are today. Keep in touch with your crush even if he has a girlfriend because you never know, after college, they might break up. Hehe." —**Yasmine Hidalgo**

"One tip: Find beauty in gaining wisdom. It will be of use someday. One thing: Graded recitations are a training ground for verbalizing thoughts. It also builds character. It wasn't so bad *pala*. I wish I knew that."—**Kooky Tuason, poet**

"I took up a course which I never thought would be useful in my career today. I wish I had not taken some subjects for granted. Also, don't be afraid to be original and inventive. Find out now if you are a leader or a team player. Business-minded or creative. It will help narrow down your options when you graduate."—**Xeng Zulueta, chief makeup artist, Shu Uemura**

BOYS!
?
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Hi! HiHi!
HAHA

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEPH BRAVO

"Enjoy. You'll never have enough time to do so when you start working. One thing I wish I knew then—how to save. I still don't know how though."—**Patwee**

"If you're miserable with your course, shift to another. I was an eco major and I hated it but I stuck it out. Look what I'm doing now, no connection whatsoever to economics."—**Tina Navarro, designer and entrepreneur, Ilaya**

"Learn as many skills as possible and don't focus your learning too much on just your major so that, at work and in life, you will always have more than one hat. And learn to play nice with people you work with. Teamwork is the key to a lot of things in life."—**Qpid, 32**

"There's life outside schoolwork. Academic performance is a given but what more you can do on top of that will make the difference. Also, invest in good relations with as many people as you can. It pays to have a great network. Sign up for classes with the best professors. Learn Mandarin. Basically make the most out of it; you only get one shot.

One thing I wish I knew back then? That the world is not limited to your org, or your current circle of friends, or Manila, or the Philippines. Widen your view. If you don't think your course is for you, shift. You'll be happier doing what you love doing in the end."—**Paul, 29, jewelry designer**

"There are many things that I wish I knew, or did in school. But all the regrettable things in it—from unqualified or lazy teachers to crappy classmates, from heartbreak to peer pressure—all contributed in some way, in varying degrees, to who I am now. But I can share this: Students should know how to properly enjoy their lives apart from school. I've seen people take their studies too seriously and collapse under the pressure of school work. Just maintain a balance. Pursue interests that aren't necessarily related to school activities, hang out with like-minded peo and cherish your time with them. W you're older and working, and whethe a job you love or not, the ability to iso your personal life from your job w prove to be handy."—**Oliver Pulumb 30-ish, freelance writer and artist**

"Study hard and try to develop own special way of learning and absor new things quickly. It would definitely great asset as you go on to your chose reer. The hard work will reflect in y transcript, and that can improve y chances of getting your dream job. D despair though if you already have a ing mark. You can still prove to compa that you can do more than what your transcript says. I wish I knew minor subjects are almost as important as major ones. I should have paid equal attention to core skills. Good oral and written communication skills and self-confidence are essentials when you are facing the real world."—**Arvin T. de Guzman, 29, engineer**

YES SIR - I SPEAK ENGLISH FLUENTER !

"Focus on the fundamental classes because they serve as the foundation for the latter y when you're bustin' the majors. Re advance so you have time to party and be cramming and downing liters of

SMART SCHEMES FOR THE SLEEP-DEPRIVED ST

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

Some handy tips on how to strike a healthy balance between school, sleep and everything else in between

DURING CLASS, DO YOU OFTEN: A) FIND it hard to concentrate, b) feel weak or jittery, or c) doze off completely? If you picked one or more, then congratulations, you're officially eligible for the School for the Sleep-Deprived.

You don't need a doctor to tell you what happens if you don't get enough sleep: lack of concentration, impaired immune system, decreased mental performance, etc.

Don't wait for your grades (and of course, your health) to suffer. Here are some handy tips on how to strike a healthy balance between school, sleep and everything else in between.

On waking up on time:

- **Reset your body clock early.** Your body needs some time before it can get used to waking up at the crack of dawn again. Before school starts, train yourself to sleep and wake up early.
- **Sound the alarm.** Those of us who sleep through alarm clocks might need to get creative. Buy the noisiest, most irritating one you can find, but make sure you don't wake up the entire neighborhood as well. If pushing the snooze button is second nature for you, put your alarm clock where it's out of your reach, so you'd be forced to get up just to make the ringing stop.

On getting enough sleep:

- **Construct a timetable.** Two words: time management. Buy or print out a daily planner in which you can organize the things you need to do for the week. Sticking to a schedule will help you avoid doing last-minute homework in the middle of the night, and it will also help you evaluate your time for work and sleep. If you can, allot more than enough time for your studies (say, an extra hour or two) so that if you finish early, you'll be rewarded with more time to rest.
- **Take a power nap.** If you stayed up all night studying and you can barely keep your eyes open the next day, there's a temporary solution to that problem. Studies have shown that even five-minute naps can significantly recharge your brain and help it retain new information.
- **Make use of your break time.** My friends often complain that, despite the merciless pile of homework, they fall asleep the minute they get home. One solution is to start doing your homework during recess, lunch or in between classes. You can also stay after school and go to the library so you can finish everything. That way, you'll have nothing else to do at home but rest.

On staying up late (and staying healthy):

- **Go for no-comfort zones.** If you prefer studying at home, do it on your desk or somewhere that doesn't promote relaxation or distraction. That means your bed, cushy sofas and the TV room are off-limits. You can allow yourself some nice, classical background music to warm up your brain. The discomfort can be a little irritating, but keep in mind that the less comfortable you are, the faster you'll want to finish your work, and the sooner you can get some shuteye.
- **Don't overdo the energy drinks.** And yes, that includes anything with caffeine in it. No amount of energy drinks can give you the same boost as adequate sleep can. But if you really need to pull an all-nighter, don't drink more than the recommended intake, or else you'll feel too jittery to focus on your homework. Chances are, you'll also be sporting a "dilat-kwago" look the following morning.
- **Sleep late, pay off later.** An article for the Kansas State University website says staying up late to study wouldn't hurt, just as long as you make up for the lack of sleep soon. But don't make a habit of it, as erratic sleeping patterns can wreak havoc on your body clock if you're not careful. Use your free time to take naps, or sleep for as long as you need to during weekends. But...
- **...Don't oversleep.** Students who are badly in need of rest tend to sleep the weekends away, thinking they're making up for lost time. While that may be true, too much sleep can actually make you sluggish and even give you the occasional headache. Wake up a bit earlier than your usual lunchtime wake-up call, and if you still feel drowsy, take a quick afternoon nap.

On dealing with sleeping problems:

- **Limit your caffeine intake.** If you just need a quick energy boost during the day but want to sleep early, make sure to avoid drinking anything with caffeine hours before bedtime. According to an article from the University of Iowa website, caffeine achieves its maximum effect two hours after ingestion, so if you plan to sleep at 9 p.m., make sure you haven't drunk coffee, tea or soda well before 7 p.m. If you have, drink lots of water to flush the caffeine out of your system.
- **Don't treat alcohol as a sleep-inducer.** Although alcoholic beverages are known to cause drowsiness, they can't guarantee a good night's sleep. It can upset your no sleep cycle and cause you to sleep fitfull making you feel exhausted the morning a ter.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

- **De-stress.** As the saying goes, tak chill pill (but don't take the "pill" part se ously). If you want to splurge, invest few aromatherapy essentials such as scent ed candles and oils, pillow sprays and th like. Pampering yourself with a nice, lo massage or a health-spa spree is also gr you need a complete physical and ment overhaul.

On the other hand, you don't hav spend for anything to get yourself t wind. Listen to chill-out music or even the sound of your own breathing. Do so simple breathing exercises (or just slow, steady breaths for five to 10 minut

The lowdown on gadgets

They are tools that are supposed to help you achieve your work or do your studies faster and easier

By Gabriel H. Mercado
Contributor

SHARE AND SYNCH. BUY gadgets that complement one another.

Bluetooth, Infrared and USB are popular ways to get two things to talk to one another, so if possible, buy gadgets that have any of these features. They allows you to share files and create backups whenever you transfer them.

Too tired to lug your laptop along? Need to distribute a file to classmates and friends? No problem, save a copy of it on a USB stick, your phone or, in some cases, even an mp3 player.

Connectivity among gadgets was developed so you can synch things like address books, calendars, pictures and even music playlists. But you can also use it to store documents and other important stuff. With even low-end phones allowing up to 10mb storage these days, it shouldn't be a problem to store Word documents, which are usually less than a megabyte in size.

Use it to the max

Now that you've bought your gadget, use it to its maximum. Maximize your caller groups. Create cool ringtones from .wav files of movies or music that you like. Learn how to make custom wallpapers to make your phone distinct from the rest. Google up on the vCalendar (.vcal) file format and comma separated values (.csv) format to learn how to transfer information among your desktop computer, laptop, cellphone and web-based calendar, or e-mail services like Yahoo or Gmail. If you can connect and update it via the Internet, by all means, go ahead.

These things are no longer the realm of geeks. Rather, these are ways to express and organize yourself, akin to adding markers to your notebooks or using multi-color pens for your notes. Tinkering with them will also make you more comfortable with technology, thus preparing you for jobs that involve such things in the future. But don't think of it that way. Just have fun.

Buy only what you need

If your funds can only buy a certain model, then this piece of advice won't apply to you. However, even if you can afford the top-of-the-line piece, make an effort to buy only what is important to you, and no more.

Why? Manufacturers are aware of the many different target markets for their products, and spend millions researching on how to make the exact perfect product for them. This is why, in a recent launch I attended for a major cell phone brand, the products they were hawking didn't necessarily have the latest and greatest features on them. In fact, some of them were rather simple by most standards.

The reason? Their marketing studies showed that a great segment of people who bought phones just because "they were the latest" didn't use and therefore didn't appreciate these high-end features, anyway.

They did study after study to figure out exactly what students, for example—an important demographic—use and appreciate in their daily lives. This means that somewhere in a manufacturer's lineup is a phone built almost exactly for you, and in all likelihood, something you would enjoy better than if you had bought the highest available model.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT G. RODRIGUEZ

Remember, it's not the features that count, but how the gadget was designed with you in mind.

Share what you know

Ultimately, we all share the blame whenever a certain make or model turns out to be a dud. Gadgets that hang or have crashing operating systems, slow response times or faulty workmanship are all things we could avoid if only the people who knew about them told everyone else.

So if you're unlucky enough to end up with one of these, tell anyone who cares to know. And if you happen to own a gem, be just as forthcoming as well. Participate in Internet forums, complain or give praise to the manufacturer, give your friends and relatives advice. Save people from the hassle of buying a lemon, and promote the ones that have served you well.

This will also help you become a more discriminating buyer, as you learn which features you appreciate most and least—an important characteristic in buying or selling anything. If more people did this, it will also send the message that the Philippine market doesn't just buy the latest new thing, but demands quality as well.

Love those laptops

Two things to remember about laptops: First, size and weight are king. So make sure your laptop doesn't weigh like the dictionary in the school library.

The standard weight for most notebooks is 2.2 kg, while anything between 1.8-1.5 kg is acceptably light. Anything lighter is probably going to cost twice as much.

However, a reduction in weight generally means a loss of some features. Therefore, don't expect laptops to have the same connectivity and overall ease of use as a desktop PC.

Desktop PCs are designed to have everything we would ever need for computing in every area, such as connectivity, a large screen, ability to read CDs and DVDs, easy to use keyboard and mouse, etc. All these become options when buying a notebook. Thus, it's a good idea to decide which features are more important, and which ones you can live without.

Work 'em tools

Gadgets are tools that are suppose help you achieve your work or do y studies faster and easier. Anything doesn't serve that purpose is either not ing its job well, or is not being used corr ly. So if you catch yourself tinkering wi more than healthy interest would allow time to adjust.

Consider the other tools we use in lives, such as notebooks (you know, ones with paper and Jolina on the co and the wall calendar. While we take th for granted, they essentially serve the s purpose as gadgets. Their purpose is same: to provide us with information help us do things faster and easier.

Thinking of gadgets as mere tools, lieve, will help us mature as gadget bu These things are no longer special. La PCs for example, have been around more than a decade. It's time we put m facturers to task, and force them to de on the "increased productivity" and " time for ourselves" promises mention their brochures.

Instead, we spend just as many if more hours tinkering, fixing, and upg ing them, not to mention working our l off to afford them as well.

Consider gadgets by how much less w they make you do and how much time give you for other things. If we buy with this in mind, manufacturers will d op stuff that would truly be useful to us not just flashy accessories for our busy l

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n yourself with these survival tips from people who sailed through ir years in school and are now conquering the real world

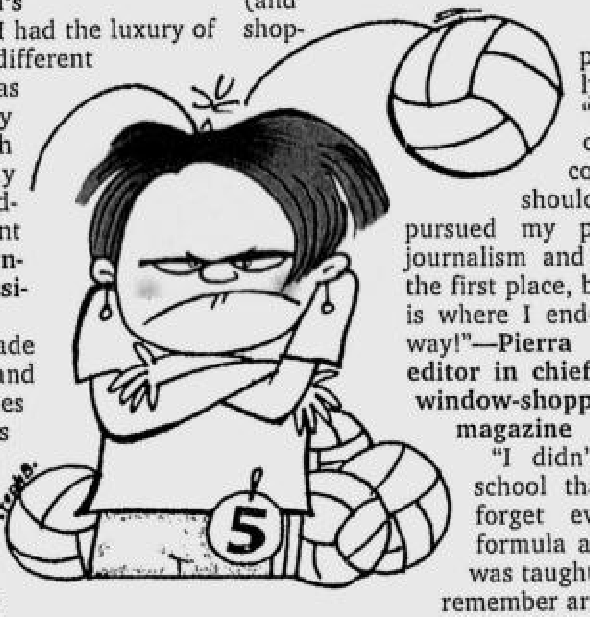
mocha. Not everything that your teachers say is wrong or right. It's up to you to filter and listen."—**Rico Robles a.k.a The Truth Behind The Booth, 20-something, servant/celebrity DJ/entertainer/registered nurse**

"Persevere. School work, like life, is not all smooth-sailing. There will be discouragements encountered along the way. Focus on your goal and never give up... I wish I knew that I could slack off and not take things too seriously. In any case, I knew that school would prepare me to reach my goal in life. I also knew that I would also learn a lot of things outside of school.—**Ruby Gan, entrepreneur**

"I wish I knew how to pass Physics. But it's not all about the grades. Enjoy school and learn more about yourself. Get ready for life."—**Ayee, 25, senior operations manager**

"It's been eight years since I graduated and the one thing I wish I knew then is how much fun school really is compared to the reality that is life. After working for almost a decade and even throughout college, I find myself longing to go back to school to take up all the things that interest me. I urge those who are still in school to enjoy and make the most of every moment. Take in every experience and explore your every interest because it will never be the same once you graduate. Those exams aren't as bad as budget projections and bottom-line deliverables." —**Tina Tinio, 32, business unit manager, Shu Uemura and Kiehl's**

"I wish I knew that I had the luxury of time to explore, try different things and make as many friends. Study hard but have as much fun. Make as many friends. Be open-minded, explore, try different things."—**Laine Santana, HSBC vice president of public affairs**

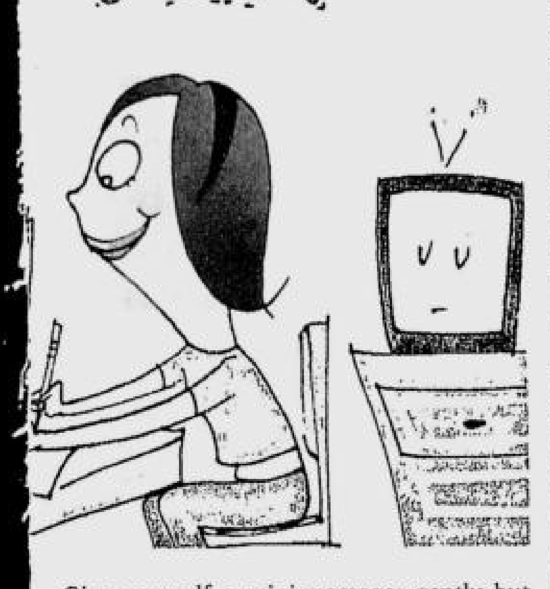


"To those in grade school—don't take PE and other outdoor activities for granted, you'll miss them more and more as time passes. To those in high school—remember your Physics, it may seem useless to many but many things can be explained later on with simple physics. For those in college—a diploma does matter, don't overlook its clout with the people that make the decisions. Also, don't take your teachers for granted, they have a lot of knowledge that they are willing to share with you though they don't really need to. They are your confidant, your connections and your friends."—**Jose Guerrero, 23, DJ at Monster Radio RX93.1**

"Balance is key. Study hard, strive to do well especially in your majors, but always, always make time for friends, family, and your own personal interests. Sometimes, the lessons you learn outside the classroom are just as important as those you learn inside. I wish I knew that I could actually make a decent career out of writing (and shopping—really!). I took a "safe" course in college, but I should have just pursued my passion for journalism and fashion in the first place, because this is where I ended up anyway!"—**Pierra Labrador, editor in chief and chief window-shopper for Meg magazine**

"I didn't know in school that I would forget every single formula and theory I was taught. What I do remember are the values I saw and emulated, the friends I made, and the teachers who went beyond the call of duty to inspire me. The skills I'm still using now are my ability to communicate and convince, my skill in working with and assembling groups and, most importantly, my discipline to persevere when the going gets tough. My tip is to treat all people well always, because you never know who among your classmates will succeed. If you were mean, trust that they will remember it. And if you were kind, they'll return the favor."—**Lex Ledesma, entrepreneur and entrepreneurship educator**

UDENT



Give yourself a mini-massage; gently but firmly rub your facial, neck and shoulder muscles in a circular motion while breathing deeply. Even your normal everyday routine such as drinking warm milk helps. Milk contains certain enzymes that will make you feel drowsy.

- **Don't self-medicate.** After burning the midnight oil for months, some students find themselves unable to sleep properly during weekends or holidays, so they turn to over-the-counter medication to help them sleep. However, self-medication is dangerous and can often lead to nasty habits. If your sleeping problem persists, see a doctor about it.

E-mail the author at aoshi_no_miko@atenista.net.

Road safety

From page C4

For drivers:

- First and most important to keep in mind when driving, is that we are also responsible of our passengers, other motorists and the pedestrians.
- Buckle up. It's the first thing to do once inside the vehicle, even for short-distance trips.
- Always practice road courtesy and discipline by following traffic signs, obeying traffic rules, using signal lights properly and observing speed limits.
- Take caution at intersections, a danger zone. Intersections can be risky because there are a lot of distractions like turning cars, pedestrians and red-light runners.
- Keep your eyes on the road and your hands on the steering wheel. Using a cell phone or reading a map will distract you and lead to an accident.
- Drive defensively. There may be erratic drivers around you. Let a tailgater pass you.
- Never drink and drive. Drunk driving has caused countless road accidents.
- Don't drive sleep-deprived. Sleep is not a matter of willpower, but a biological need. If you become drowsy, pull off the road and get some rest.
- Know and understand the safety features of your vehicle. Read the manual, it explains how the safety features function.
- Always leave extra space between your car and the car in front of you, especially when the road is wet. During a stormy weather it maybe best not to drive and to just stay in doors.
- Do not to let peer pressure influence safe driving habits.

How to make . . .

From page C1

had to take, with a difficult teacher no less, I thought of empathizing with my teacher so I could better understand her. I closed my eyes, relaxed and tried to see the world through her eyes. I got a momentary headache because of it, but it worked nonetheless, because ever since then, I knew what questions she was going to ask in an exam, because I knew the way her mind works. That is why in listening, empathy is key.

Help sincerely

Another way you can show that you are present and aware inside the classroom, is by showing sincere concern. Try to be helpful when your teacher needs aid with the technical stuff. Offer to clean the blackboard, smile often and show you are listening with a receptive posture. This memory will certainly be evoked when your teacher is deciding whether to pass or fail you, or whether to give you that excellent grade or just the next best thing. Being helpful, however, only works if you are sincere about it.

Get real

This is also good advice for when your teacher asks you to do a paper that introduces yourself, or serves as a diagnostic paper. In an effort to show you are intelligent, do not present yourself as a pompous know-it-all. Do not brag about all your previous accomplishments, which prestigious high school you were from and what you are capable of. Be original. Find a way of bringing up your achievements without seeming arrogant about it. Show other's positive feedback of you. Be honest with your flaws and quirks, as well as your misgivings about the course. Phrase it with tact and always end with your willingness to do better and see these things as opportunities for growth. Show how your humility goes a long way.

Laugh along

Laugh at the teacher's jokes. Laughing shows a connection with her, it is often difficult to force or contrive. It is also a good tip to sit in front or in the teacher's line of view. In choosing where to sit, associate yourself with the right kind of people as well (the ones who can actually have something to offer and teach you, and the ones you don't mind being likened to), but show how you are also willing to help classmates in need, too.

I am A-worthy

When your teacher asks what your expectations are for the course, do not hesitate to admit that you want an A for it, if what is really what you desire. As a teacher, I actually come to the class believing that every student deserves an A until proven otherwise. More often that not, this will alert your teacher to how to guide you to your desired goal.

Work with the goal in mind. Picture yourself at the end of the course, having achieved and excellent job for the task given, and an excellent grade to go with it. Ask yourself what it takes to fulfill that goal and work backwards from there, setting your own goals and standards.

Practice gratitude

Teaching is reminding people they know just as well, and teachers appreciate self-motivated students, as their drive and their ambition is palpable, not to mention contagious. This doesn't mean one should be too grade-conscious and nitpicky. Show that you are in it for the real learning, and not because you are collecting points for your resumé. Show that you are on your own path to self-awareness and awareness of the greater world around you, and that you are grateful to people sent as your guides.

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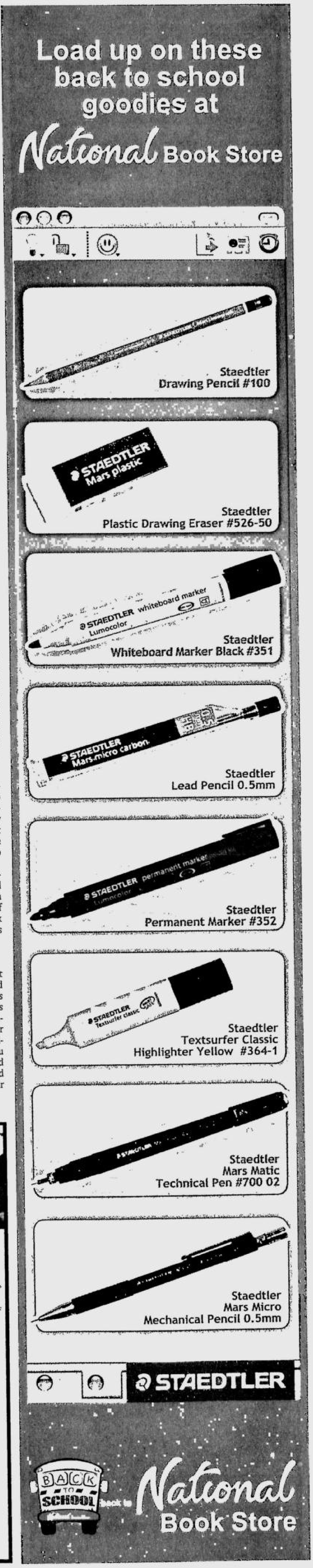
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Campus retouch

Vanity Fair

Lora Gabol

I HAVE MANY REGRETS FROM MY SCHOOL days: having crammed too much, not having bonded with people, not building friendships with professors... the list goes on.

The worst thing about strolling down this particular street on memory lane is remembering how harassed I looked. If there was one thing I didn't have in my heaving school bag, it was a *kikay* kit!

Let me list down the real essentials you will need to breeze through your schooldays beautifully.

Pressed powder. Pick a compact powder with a light consistency but which gives enough coverage to disguise minor blemishes and undereye circles. One that does the job is Neutrogena Fine Fairness Face Powder. It absorbs shine and goes on even, and is packed with skin-friendly Vitamin C and SPF 15.

Blush. Choose a liquid, gel or cream formula in peach or pink tones. These also have the longest staying power, taking you from your first class to dismissal time without fussy touch-ups. I found a reasonably priced alternative to more expensive blushes in In-2-It Gel Blush. It lends a rosy pink flush to cheeks, is non-sticky, and doesn't cause or aggravate blemishes.

Lip Balm. Tote a pot of Lip Balm for a few discreet swipes through the day. I keep one Ballmania Lip Balm (in trippy basketball packaging!) and Godiva Lightening Lip Gloss. The former is just the sweetest-tasting lip product in the market today, and the latter really lives up to its promise to keep lips soft, smooth and rosy.

Lash curler, mascara, eye drops. These three will give you a bright-eyed look: prep your eyes with eye drops like Visine Refresh to get rid of any redness, and to relieve eyestrain, too. Curl your lashes, then apply a coat of lash tint like Pout Wet Lash Mascara. This fresh new mascara formulation doesn't run or clump, so there's no need to worry about smudges even in the middle of the most hectic school day.

Hair product. Even when there's no time to whip up a blow dryer and hair iron, you can prep your locks with the right styling product. The easiest hair fixer-upper is a stick wax. It works on curly, straight, fine, coarse and unmanageable hair types. Bench Fix Stick Up wax is a good, inexpensive pick. For longer hair that's relatively easy to style, choose a light shine spray or serum that will keep flyaways at bay while boosting shine. Loreal Professionel Lumioil has three formulations. Just find the consistency that's best for your hair type.

E-mail the author at lora_gahol@yahoo.com.

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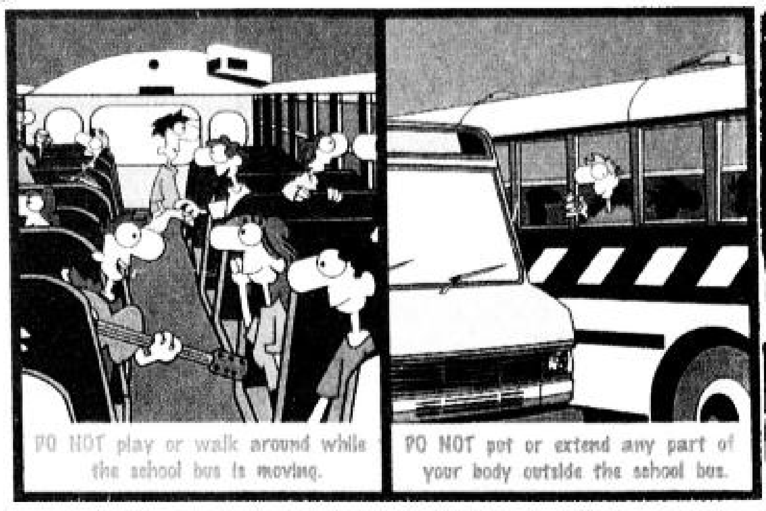

DO NOT play or walk around while the school bus is moving.

DO NOT put or extend any part of your body outside the school bus.

Road safety is your responsibility

By the Ford Road Safety Youth Council

EVERY 18 SECONDS SOMEone is involved in an auto accident; every 11 minutes someone dies. Scary as it may be, it has to be said. It's our job to inform our peers of the importance of road safety.

As members of the Ford Road Safety Youth Council, we make it a point to "use peer pressure in a positive way." We try to tell our fellow students, family and neighbors that road safety is very important and that it is very dangerous to be reckless.

When you're on the road, you have to take into consideration that it's not just your life you're dealing with, but the lives of your family, and the lives of somebody else's family. Road safety isn't just for drivers; it's for passengers and pedestrians.

Here are some street-smart strategies every driver and pedestrian, especially students, should keep in mind.

For pedestrians:

- Use overpasses and pedestrian lanes when crossing the street. Taking the effort to use them will save you from grief.
- Walk on the sidewalk at all times, keeping in mind that the road is for vehicles, not for people.
- Be mindful of the vehicles coming your way.
- Trivial as it may sound, "Stop, Look and Listen" works.

For commuters:

- Get on and off the bus or jeepneys only at full stop and at designated stops.
- Avoid making unnecessary movements and noise that can distract the driver.
- Do not extend any part of your body outside the vehicle.

For passengers:

- Wear your seatbelt at all times, including those seated at the back. Airbags are only supplemental to seatbelts.
- Never overload the vehicle. The number of seatbelts in the vehicle should determine the number of passengers.

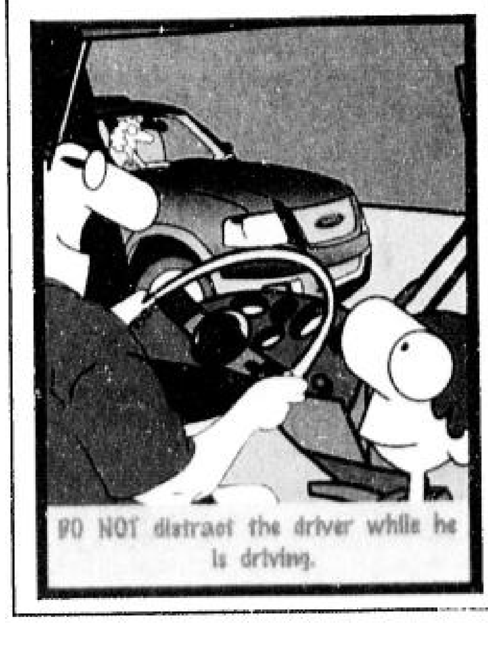
ROAD C2

Join the ride

COMPOSED OF 15 CORE STUDENTS from the Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, UP Diliman, UP Los Baños, Asia Pacific College, Philippine School of Business Administration, and Thames, The Ford Road Safety Youth Council is Ford Group Philippines' answer to the growth of the number of road accidents involving young drivers because of alcohol and aggressiveness.

"We would like to reach out to more young people, who are considered as today's and the future's drivers. Ford believes that the best way to communicate with them is through programs that they can easily identify with and are initiated by their peers. We laud the members of the Ford Road Safety Youth Council for taking on the challenging task of being role models and practitioners of road safety," said Henry Co, president of Ford Group Philippines.

If you want to become part of The Ford Road Safety Youth Council, call 6352587 or 0917-8918229. Look for Hans Chua, Road Safety Youth Council director for membership.


DO NOT distract the driver while he is driving.